CRITICALLY INVESTIGATING THE COMPLEX, EMERGENT (NON)INFLUENCE OF SPORT COACHING PRACTICE

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CRITICALLY INVESTIGATING THE COMPLEX, EMERGENT (NON)INFLUENCE OF SPORT COACHING PRACTICE

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Abstract

Sport coaches have long been recognised as influential figures in the development of athletes. Despite this, evidence concerning coaching practice and its influence on others (e.g., athletes) is fragmented. Often, work in this area has produced romanticised portrayals of coaches as powerful leaders, who are able to directly *control* the actions of followers (e.g., athletes). Similarly, athletes have widely been cast as subservient recipients of coaching practice who (in some cases) are portrayed as being capable of either wholly conforming with *or* resisting the requests of coaches. As such, researchers, practitioners and other stakeholders in the coaching context are left with little clarity to inform the often subtle, dialectical and emergent realities of their work. Indeed, the extended literature review and more focused systematic review of this thesis shows that research investigating the influence of coaching practice has typically been approached from a positivist perspective, frequently portraying athletes' experiences *of* and responses *to* practice as passive, linear, consistent and homogeneous. The dynamics of relational and emergent interaction between coaches and others therefore remain underexplored. We lack more intricate and complex causal explanations of *how*, *when*, *why*, and *under which circumstances* practice is influential (or not). Thus, the significance and novelty of the present thesis resides in its attempt to develop insights into both the intended and unintended influences of coaching practice as complex interactions between primarily structural and agential entities. A methodological bricolage of participant observation, semi-structured interviews and stimulated recall interviews was adopted to address the research questions as part of a critical realist ethnography of a representative-level cricket squad in the UK. In total, 182 hours of observational data and 46 hours of interview data were collected. Data were generated (and analysed) using the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) in order to produce retroductive and retrodictive explanation of coach (non)influence. Following emic analysis, Jones & Wallace's (2005, 2006) theory of *orchestration* and Elder-Vass' (2007, 2010a, 2012a) *emergentist theory of action*, *norm circles* and the *causal power of social structures* provided flexible heuristic devices to problematise, extend and develop (new) coaching theory. Findings provide novel insights into the (non)influence of coaching practice. These encompass: a) the

mechanisms through which coaches influence (or not) others, b) the means through which (i.e., *how*, *when*, *why*, and *under which circumstances*) coaches orchestrate by endorsing or enforcing norms in attempt to influence others (e.g., athletes, other coaches), c) the importance of noticing (inter)action which conforms with, deviates from, endorses or enforces normative standards (on the part of both the coach and the athlete) in bringing about (non)influence, d) the means through which (i.e., *how*, *when*, *why*, and *under which circumstances*) athletes orchestrate by (simultaneously) conforming with and/or resisting attempts of (multiple) coaches to influence them. Overall then, this thesis contributes to and extends the embryonic body of work which considers the situated, temporal and unintended (multiple) influences of coach (inter)action. Further, it considers the role of both social structure *and* conscious reflexivity in this process. Studying the influence of coaching in this way presents stakeholders with empirically and theoretically driven accounts which better reflect the often subtle, unobtrusive and dialectical realities of (non)influence in practice. As such, findings may help to support and develop the sociological literacy of coaches and those within their relational networks. The thesis also contributes a theoretical and methodological approach which can be implemented to investigate influence within other contexts.

Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures and Appendices

Publications arising from this thesis

Journal Articles:

Nichol, A. J., Hall, E. T., Vickery, W., & Hayes, P. R. (2019). Examining the relationships between coaching practice and athlete "outcomes": A systematic review and critical realist critique. *International Sport Coaching Journal, 6*(1), 13-29.

Conference Papers:

Nichol, A. J., Hayes, P. R., Vickery, W., Boocock, E., & Hall, E. T. (2019). Understanding the influence of coaching practice through an emergentist theory of action. *Oral presentation delivered at The Cluster for Research into Coaching (CRiC) 5th International Coaching Conference,* September 2019, Worcester, UK.

Nichol, A. J., Hayes, P. R., Vickery, W., Boocock, E., & Hall, E. T. (2019). How do culture and norm circles (as shaped by coaches and others) play a role in influencing the actions of cricketers? *Oral presentation delivered at the World Congress of Science and Medicine in Cricket,* July 2019, Loughborough, UK.

Nichol, A. J., Hall, E. T., Vickery, W., & Hayes, P. R. (2018). Empirically investigating practitioner impact and influence: Insights and reflections from interdisciplinary sport coaching research. *Oral presentation delivered at the BASES Student Conference,* April 2018, Northumbria University, UK.

Nichol, A. J., Hall, E. T., Vickery, W., & Hayes, P. R. (2017). Examining the relationships between naturalistic coaching practice and athlete outcomes: A systematic review. *Oral presentation delivered at the 11th International Council for Coaching Excellence Global Coaches' Conference,* August 2017, Liverpool John Moores University, UK.

Nichol, A. J., Hall, E. T., Vickery, W., & Hayes, P. R. (2017). Examining the relationships between coaching practice and athlete outcomes: A systematic review. *Poster presentation delivered at the National Coaching Conference,* May 2017, Atlanta, GA.

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DECLARATION

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. I also confirm that this work fully acknowledges the opinions, ideas and contributions from the work of others.

Any ethical clearance for the research presented in this thesis has been approved. Approval has been sought and gained from the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences Ethics Committee for all work on 27/10/2017.

Name: Adam James Nichol

Signature: 

Date: 30/03/2020

Chapter 1: Introduction

"What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead" –

Nelson Mandela

1918 - 2013

That coaches are expected to influence others appears axiomatic (Côté & Gilbert, 2009; Horn, 2008; Lyle & Cushion, 2017; Potrac, Brewer, Jones, Armour, & Hoff, 2000; Potrac & Jones, 2009). For instance, it has been suggested that, through their practice, coaches may contribute (positively or negatively) to athletes' self-esteem (e.g., Smith, Smoll, & Curtis, 1978), anxiety (e.g., Smith, Smoll, & Cumming, 2007), satisfaction (e.g., Chelladurai, 1984), confidence, competence, connection and character (e.g., Côté & Gilbert, 2009), coping skills (e.g., Gano-Overway, Steele, Boyce, & Whaley, 2017), motivation (e.g., Reinboth & Duda, 2006), performance (Mouchet, Harvey, & Light, 2014), and wellbeing (e.g., Ntoumanis, Taylor, & Thøgersen-Ntoumani, 2012). However, as Kelchtermans (2009, p. 266) usefully pointed out in the teaching domain: 'teachers, can, only to a very limited degree, prove their effectiveness by claiming that pupils' results directly follow from their actions. All teachers realise that student outcomes are only partially determined by their teaching'. Further:

> It is not only difficult to prove to what extent a teacher can argue that students' results are his/her own achievement, but equally difficult to know when a result of teachers' actions possibly may occur and become visible at all (Kelchtermans, 2009, p. 266).

Echoing these sentiments in the field of coaching, Jones and Wallace (2005, p. 120) asserted that coaches may:

> be unable to measure the attainment of unquantifiable goals, such as promoting the enjoyment of participation or the 'progressive' development of their athletes. For coaches can realise their ambitions only through the success of the athletes for whom they are responsible. Coaches' ambitions rest on what such athletes learn, and how their increased capability translates into improved athletic understanding and,

> ultimately, performance. Yet coaches can never gain absolute predictive control over their charges' learning and actions, let alone read their minds or feel their emotions.

These words resonate particularly well with my own experiences as a sports coach. I, like many other practitioners, am continually motivated to coach by the potential difference that I might be able to make (however small that contribution may be) to somebody else's life (Camiré, Trudel, & Forneris, 2012). It is, then, somewhat of an irony that the very thing which motivates many coaches to coach is currently an ill-informed and incredibly complex phenomenon to understand; it is something that is presently very difficult for practitioners to substantively stake a claim to at all. In this regard, although many coaches often assume that their practice, or sport more broadly, is influential, they often struggle to articulate specifically *how*, *when*, and *why* such influence 'happens' (McCallister, Blinde, & Weiss, 2000). Indeed, this structural vulnerability (Kelchtermans, 2009) and ambiguity (Jones & Wallace, 2005) which are central features of coaching (and will be further defined in section 4.5 of this thesis) may help to explain and support representations of coaching as 'working at the edge of chaos' (Bowes & Jones, 2006), or necessitating 'orchestrated activity' (Jones & Wallace, 2005, 2006). As will become important throughout this thesis, rather than suggesting coaches have imperial control, orchestration implies that coaches instead attempt to manage or work with pathos. Here, pathos refers to the distance that often exists between goals that have been set and the actual ability to achieve these goals (Jones & Wallace, 2005).

Despite such difficulty and complexity in determining the influence that practitioners have, many studies have continued to portray leaders (i.e., coaches) as powerful, dominant agents who are able to unproblematically exert greater control over the actions of their followers (Tourish, 2019). This is perhaps best encapsulated by Meindl, Ehrlich and Dukerich's (1985) *'romance of leadership'*, which suggests that leaders' contributions are frequently exaggerated and tend to be treated as a direct causal and explanatory phenomenon in both folk pedagogy and academic research alike (Collinson, Jones, & Grint, 2018). For instance, coaches are often overly credited for high performance (e.g., with phrases like "that team talk at half-time must have worked" after a team wins a match from a losing position), or are held overly accountable for poor performance or

failure (i.e., demonstrated by an upsurgence in the number of coach dismissals for performance-related reasons; Flores, Forrest, & Tena, 2012). It is therefore unsurprising that, in order to illustrate such direct influence, many attempts to isolate fragments or snapshots of coach behaviour and tie these causally to outcomes of athletes have fallen short of matching the complexity of coaching; they have oversimplified the sophisticated, dynamic and temporal dimensions of coaching as an interactional, relational 'whole' (Jones & Ronglan, 2018). Furthermore, they unduly portray the activity of coaching as a simplistic 'sequential chain of cause and effect' (Jones, Edwards, & Viotto Filho, 2016, p. 211), whilst positioning the coach as a wholly rationalistic and heroic agent free to do coaching *to* athletes in the form of an 'unproblematic recipe' or '"guaranteed" prescription' (Potrac, Smith, & Nelson, 2017, p. 131). Given that sport coaching is an inherently social, complex, and multifaceted affair (Bowes & Jones, 2006; Cassidy, Jones, & Potrac, 2004; Cushion, 2007), we know that practice and its influence is rarely so straight forward. How athletes, for example, perceive, interpret and evaluate the behaviour of their coach can play a pivotal role in determining its influence (Horn, 2008; Jones, 2006b), and the reactions of assistant coaches, athletes' parents and other stakeholders also impinge upon and shape coaching practice (Potrac, Jones, Gilbourne, & Nelson, 2012; Potrac, Mallett, Greenough, & Nelson, 2017). Thus, it is important to recognise that coaching, like any social activity, does not take place within a relational or contextual vacuum (Shulman, 2017); coaching is replete with ambiguity, novelty and pathos (Bowes & Jones, 2006; Jones, Bailey, & Thompson, 2013; Jones & Wallace, 2005; Potrac et al., 2012), which generate sometimes contradictory and challenging problems to be negotiated and resolved (Saury & Durand, 1998). This draws attention to the need for more sophisticated accounts of practice that engage with its intentions (Hemmestad, Jones, & Standal, 2010), its prospects and its pathos (Potrac, Mallett, et al., 2017), its intended and unintended consequences, and which provide vivid renderings of the unfolding (inter)actions of coaches and others as they engage in micro-political acts of mutual influence (Potrac et al., 2012).

Recognising the current lack of understanding surrounding more complex (inter)relations between how coaching practice is undertaken and its influence on athletes (Horn, 2008; Lyle,

2002), Lyle and Cushion (2017) recently highlighted the importance of placing the impact of coaching at the heart of future inquiry:

> There is a clear role for research here. There needs to be a body of knowledge that links the parameters of the coaching process to the outcomes achieved. These principles may never be translated into statistical guidelines, but analysis and understanding of coaching practice will be incomplete without an acknowledgement of the relationships between the scope and scale of the coaching process and the resultant outputs (p. 56).

Without such work, practitioners will continue to lack an empirical base to draw from in considering *how*, *when*, *why*, and *under which circumstances* their practice is likely (or not) to influence their athletes (Lyle, 2018). Thus, redressing this dearth of literature, and researching coaching in ways which better connect to, represent and explain the (inter)actions of athletes in light of their inter-actions with others (i.e., coaches) holds strong potential to advance the field (Purdy & Jones, 2011). Overall, work exploring more complex connections between coaching practice and its influence would address what is arguably the most fundamental aim of research in the sport coaching field: to have utility, applicability and transferability into practice[1] (Gould, 2016; Lyle, 2018). The significance and novel contribution of this work therefore lies in its attempt to unearth a more sophisticated, detailed empirical and theoretical exploration of *how*, *when*, *why*, and *under which circumstances* coaching practice influences (or does not influence) others (e.g., athletes) and their actions. Building upon and extending a small body of work which has started to explore the temporal and emergent influence of coaching practice, this thesis adds novel relational understandings of coach *and* athlete orchestration, considering the role of normative social structures and conscious agency in this process. It is anticipated that advancing knowledge in this regard holds strong potential to better inform a range of stakeholders, particularly coaches, in becoming more sociologically literate (i.e., being able to effectively read and understand how their actions are multiply determined, and how these actions themselves, among other entities, have the

[1] Importantly, here, I refer to 'transferability into practice' in the sense of providing empirical and theoretical resources which practitioners can *reflect upon* and *think with*, before understanding how they might benefit from or apply the work to their own specific circumstances (perhaps with adaptations). I do not refer to generalisability in the sense of 'definitive prescriptions *for* practice'. For more detail on this, please refer to section 5.6 of this thesis.

potential to multiply determine the actions of others). Sitting at the nexus between research and practice, the research problem identified above was not solely generated through an awareness of previous research. It was also heavily informed and ignited by my experiences as a coaching practitioner. As such, I now provide some context to my personal background and how this simultaneously fed into my identification and formation of the research problem.

1.1 My story, background and research origins

Since the age of three, from the moment my parents took me to my local cricket club - a warm welcoming club on our doorstep - I began to develop an inherent love for sport, and more specifically the game of cricket. I remember my first session vividly. Paying my money to the subscriptions lady and receiving a stamp with 'the mighty acorns' (the nickname of our club) to acknowledge receipt of payment, the imprint of which barely fitted on the back of my hand. While experiencing emotions of both excitement and nervousness in equal measure, the knot in my stomach reflected my initial reluctance to participate. Eventually, my parents were forced to physically run around with me to get me to join in – elucidating the crucial and increasingly recognised role that parents often play within the activity of coaching (Gould, Lauer, Rolo, Jannes, & Pennisi, 2008; Weiss & Fretwell, 2005; Wiersma & Sherman, 2005). The coach eventually having to say, "c'mon, Janet, are you going to leave the lad to play cricket!?". Such simple (interpreted) humour and the display of rapport with my parents made me feel slightly more at ease in this new, daunting context.

As the sun baked down on the fields of Langwell Crescent, with over a hundred children taking part in various sessions, I remember learning about fundamental technical elements of the game. This involved lots of hitting balls from a batting tee or feeds from coaches, lots of bowling toward partners or toward a target, and lots of fielding practice. The first feeling of bat on ball, the first successful catch, the first time the stumps were knocked over from my bowling; all moments which gave a sense of pride and immensely developed both my confidence and enjoyment within the cricketing arena. As I grew, other prominent memories included playing at 'the tree' on a Saturday afternoon after our training sessions had finished. Religiously, we would finish training,

head up the ‘main street’ to get some lunch and return to begin our own ‘test match’ at ‘the tree’. ‘The tree’ was situated at the bottom of the ground, outside of the boundary line and provided a makeshift set of stumps within our ‘test match ground’ for all juniors of the club to play at, while watching the seniors’ matches. Being enthralled by watching the first and second eleven senior teams, and aiming to replicate their performances, we would spend endless hours at ‘the tree’, experimenting, testing, failing, succeeding and not wanting the match to end. For me, reflecting back on this experience reinforces the ability of athletes to come up with and utilise creative constraints, without the need for constant (ongoing) direct coach instruction or intervention (Kidman & Lombardo, 2010). We constructed our own ‘test match’, with our own rules, including ‘six runs and out’ if you hit the ball over the fence onto the adjoining road (mainly because it meant that somebody would have to climb over or run all the way round to retrieve it!), or the rule that you were out immediately if you struck the ball onto the pitch where the senior team were playing. As a batter you were also required to carefully navigate your shots around the metal cages (labelled by us as fielders) which protected newly planted trees, in order to avoid being ‘caught out’. No doubt, these environmental and task constraints (Renshaw, Chow, Davids, & Hammond, 2010) were shaped by our previous experiences of playing, and how coaches had created particular environments. In other words, some influence was felt.

My desire to improve as a cricketer fed my increasing curiosity to understand more about how our coaches were working with us to develop our performance, why they acted and behaved in certain ways, and how we could continue to use similar strategies independently outside of our coaching sessions. I would spend hour after hour in my back yard – barely five metres in length – dropping a ball for myself and grooving my front foot drive technique, hitting the ball straight into the garage door (before being told off for making a racket and being asked to hit the ball into the brick wall instead!). As a result of working with coaches – role models – in my early years I always wanted to imitate what they were doing and developed a passion to help others in the same way. At the age of 13, I began to help younger squads at the club, taking small segments of warm-ups and giving ‘tips’ infrequently (because that was what coaches had done for me). My coaching at this

point was thus largely an uncritical replication of what I had been told, and had received myself in the way of coaching as a player (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2006). Admittedly, my view of coaching at this point resembled much more of a clean, 'clinical', structured process, than that of my current conceptualisation. I subsequently sought out a route to complete the UKCC (United Kingdom Coaching Certificate) qualifications with the ECB (England and Wales Cricket Board) and took on any opportunities possible to enhance my skillset as a coach: through school, formal (e.g., ECB) and informal opportunities.

My participation within cricket as a player also continued to increase and after successful trials I was fortunate to be selected to play at county level from under 11, and then at the Bunbury Festival for the North of England squad as an under 15. Raising my exposure to, and awareness of different coaching methods at higher levels, my hunger to understand more about what these coaches did and how this had an influence on players rose. Specifically, I was attentive to how this was different to other forms of coaching that I had experienced in the past: why were these coaches coaching at this level, and what made them more effective coaches? I remember being enthralled by the complex, yet slick nature of their activities and my eagerness to implement the new coaching practices I had learned into my own coaching (before realising that they were unsuitable or required adaptation to be relevant for the demands of my own coaching context). Upon completing my UKCC Level 2 Award in Coaching Cricket, I was then asked to coach the regional under 11 county representative level team and jumped at the opportunity to work with the best players in the county, alongside maintaining my coaching role at club level. By the age of 17 I took on the role of Junior Coordinator at my local club and became responsible for the organisation, administration and coaching of junior players at club level. I also gained a strong passion for refereeing in football around this time point and continued to juggle this commitment, alongside coaching roles in both cricket and football officiating. Two vastly different contexts, requiring different skillsets as a coach. To provide some brief context here, when coaching football referees it is not as practical to intervene while performance is (close to) taking place (i.e., the match is

being refereed), as it is in cricket contexts, where more behaviours or actions of the coach can be implemented closer to, or concurrent with performance taking place.

After completing my GCSE's and A-levels, taking an interest in anything physical education-related alongside my coaching activities, I decided to move on to study an Applied Sport and Exercise Science with Coaching degree. Throughout this course I began to critically understand how theory could be applied to coaching contexts, my personal coaching behaviour, and why coaches might utilise certain behaviours or actions in their pedagogical practices (Jones, Morgan, & Harris, 2012). Further, my undergraduate modules provided me with a platform to begin to reflect on how my coaching practice aligned, or was incongruent with my coaching philosophy and how effective this practice might have been for the contexts within which I worked (Lyle & Cushion, 2010). These coaching modules were nested within a programme of core sport science modules (i.e., psychology, physiology and biomechanics) which gave me a grounding of some features which were important for coaches to consider in informing their practice. My experiences in sport coaching and sport science somewhat coalesced and cultivated my hunger to understand more about how sporting practitioners could generate (positive) influence. Specifically, I developed an interest in how the components of my practical coaching modules might be connected to some of the sport science modules and their recommendations (i.e., how might the behaviours and actions of coaches influence psychological, biomechanical or physiological outcomes?). Indeed, this was one of the main driving factors behind my decision to commence a Ph.D.

After starting my role as a postgraduate researcher, alongside my experiences as a coach, tutor, coach mentor, and through teaching on undergraduate programmes, I had by now developed a keen interest in how *what* we do as practitioners may have an impact on the people with which we work, and how we can critically reflect upon and enhance the effectiveness of our actions. In the early stages of my Ph.D. these experiences led me to question: how do we actually know if the coach has had an impact, and how is it possible to know that this is the case? Specifically, I questioned how coaches' actions may play a role in the development of operational outputs or

'outcomes' of their athletes. For example, do specific behaviours, actions, or coaching practices enhance motivation; do they decrease confidence; do they increase the skill level or performance of our athletes, but more importantly, *how can we know that this is the case*? Here, in my own coaching, when I delivered specific behaviours (e.g., praise) to an athlete (e.g., after successful performance), I became sensitised to noticing what the actual influence of this was. Could some of this influence be understood through the emotions that athletes displayed after I had delivered the praise? If they smiled did this mean that my behaviour had a positive influence? What if the athlete was putting on a display or 'front', and was masking their true feelings (Goffman, 1959)? What guaranteed that their emotions were a result of my behaviour and not a response to something else which had happened (i.e., being proud of their own successful performance)? Should I ask the athlete how they felt about the behaviour that I had delivered, or would this degrade the authenticity of my performance as a coach (Lee, Chelladurai, & Kim, 2015)? Here, it dawned on me that, as a practitioner, I did not have any sure-fire way of understanding how my behaviour influenced the stakeholders with whom I worked. As a student, I had encountered little research to inform me in this respect. This led me to critically consider how this problem might be approached through empirical investigation. I now explore my thought processes surrounding the initial conceptualisation of the research problem, before introducing how my philosophical thinking changed and consequently shaped the implementation of my work.

Early in my pursuit of addressing these questions, my line of thinking was clearly guided by the positivist epistemology which had underpinned and informed the majority of modules on my undergraduate degree. I was immediately flooded with a number of possible standpoints from which I could attack the problem. These issues led to a myriad of methodological, ontological and epistemological challenges to contend with. Initially, scribbling my cognitions down and organising them into a somewhat structured schematic, I began to think that the research problem could be approached by manipulating specific coach behaviour(s) (i.e., asking coaches to deliver specific behaviours) and assessing the influence that this had on specific populations. Here, I thought, would it be possible to focus on the influence of specific coach behaviours (e.g., praise)

while controlling for the role of other behaviours (e.g., scold, criticism) and factors (e.g., skill level, environmental conditions) which could also influence the relationship, before measuring 'objective' athlete outputs (e.g., heart rate, hormone levels, GPS/accelerometry data) and seeking links between the two? What struck me as being problematic about this approach was that it did not represent the natural coaching environment. How would asking coaches to deliver certain behaviours transfer into the messy realities of real-life coaching? That being said, I also felt that if I did not control for certain variables when investigating the relationship between coaching practice and athlete outcomes, then how could I ascertain that it was *x* coach behaviour which had *"caused"* the athlete outcome of interest and not something else?

There was a trade-off to be had between increasing the ecological validity and representativeness of the coaching work being carried out (by not attempting to manipulate specific coach behaviours which could and could not be delivered), or negating some of the ecological validity and more closely getting to grips with specific coach behaviours that were related to specific athlete outcomes (in isolation). In this sense, would it be possible to ask the same coaches to deliver the same sessions, using pre-prescribed coaching behaviours (e.g., more/less praise and scold), I asked myself. Athletes at different standards of performance (i.e., recreational, performance, elite) will naturally vary in their outcomes though (e.g., they may be more physiologically developed, stronger, or more proficient in terms of skill – Callan & Naito, 2014; Gissis et al., 2006). So, there would perhaps be a need to compare data to baseline measures, or use coaches from a similar domain (e.g., Smith, Smoll, & Curtis, 1979). But, this would still make it difficult to ascertain differences in athlete outcomes between different coaches (if researching different athletes). Easy, I thought. Just use the same athletes with different coaches. This way I would be able to discern differences between how the same athletes responded to different coaches. However, different sessions (delivered by the same coach) may naturally lead to different physiological outcomes, for example. Use the same session plan with different coaches (and the same athletes), I pondered? Again, while these approaches may have provided interesting information and data, they rendered themselves useless in their inability to account for coaches

naturally putting their own stamp on sessions (Potrac, Jones, & Nelson, 2014). Moreover, would it ever be possible (or indeed practicable) to prescribe certain proportions of coach behaviour, I thought.

There was a simple solution to this in my mind at the time: use the same athletes, with different coaches and account for normal (naturally different) sessions produced by the coach, and then measure rate of perceived exertion (RPE), generated from athletes as a standardisation tool. I critically challenged myself again. Utilising RPE may include participant or retrospective bias when athletes are reporting this measure, depending upon how much they like their coach (Côté, Ericsson, & Law, 2005), and whether or not they had previously worked with the coach and developed a rapport (Smith, Fry, Ethington, & Li, 2005). It was at this point that I felt a 'lightbulb' moment. Here, I came to realise that the aim of my work was not necessarily to control for variables which may influence the relationships between coaching practice and athlete outcomes. Instead, it was my role to embrace the naturalistic (complex) nature of coaching and investigate how this 'normal' practice could influence athletes and their outcomes.

This complex research problem, then, required a thorough critique of the current literature base to better identify, rationalise and generate implications for my work. Throughout conducting both the general literature review and systematic review (see Chapters 2 and 3), I increasingly came to resonate with the view that, rather than being a functional, controllable, sequential process, coaching was instead a complex every-day, power-ridden pursuit which requires the management of microrelations (Jones, 2000; Potrac & Jones, 2009). In other words, I reached a 'crisis point' in that the only paradigmatic approach in my repertoire – positivism – had failed in its ability to adequately underpin my (social) research question. I required another paradigm. At this point, I began to understand the benefits and utility of integrating more than one research method in order to collect a richer data set, which was more likely to resemble or portray the realities of coaching practice. Here, in response to my growing dissatisfaction with portrayals of coaching as a straightforward, rationalistic endeavour, I came to recognise that making use of a methodological bricolage was better positioned to understand the *why* and *how* of coaching as opposed to simply

the *what* (Potrac et al., 2000). This led me to the next question – was there another paradigm (to positivism) which supported the deployment of multiple methods and how would this fit with given ontological and epistemological positions? Given positivism had rendered itself to be of minimal use, as depicted above, I was drawn, in my reading, to explore pragmatism (e.g., through Feilzer, 2010) and critical realism (e.g., through Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010) in light of their stances on methodological plurality. The more I read about pragmatism, after initially finding solace from the fact that whichever methods fitted the research question could be used, I then began to struggle with the concept that epistemology and ontology were largely considered as having little practical use (in informing the design of research projects) and almost appeared to be sidestepped. Interpretivism provided another potential avenue through which the issues identified with positivism above could be addressed (Potrac et al., 2014). Indeed, I began to see real value in many aspects of the interpretivist approach. Specifically, I was drawn to the ability of interpretivism to describe in rich depth and explore the meaning ascribed to phenomena by participants (Potrac et al., 2014; Ryan, 2018; Sparkes, 1992). However, the possibility for multiple realities (i.e., when referring to material entities) and a turn away from causal explanation felt somewhat uncomfortable for me; I felt a need to recognise some entities, at least, as being real or being capable of existing independently from our identification of them (and able to causally influence other entities). The more I read about critical realism, principally through the works of Bhaskar (1975, 2011), and in a more digestible format related to sport coaching, North (2017), the more I began to think to myself 'this makes sense', and 'yes, this fits with what I believe and how I see the world'. Specifically, the central role of theory and causal explanation, viewing events as complex and multiply determined, matched both my ontological views and understandings of how the process of sport coaching operated. And so, the thesis was born. Blending experiences of research and practice, I had formulated a meaningful research problem and was armed with (what I consider to be) a coherent philosophical position to address it.

1.2 Research purpose

The overarching purpose of this study is to more closely understand the complex and emergent role of coaching practice in influencing (or not influencing) others. Specifically, the significance and novelty of the work lies in its attempt to theorise the mechanisms through which such influence (or noninfluence) occurs and how this can explain specific social (empirical) events. In doing so, I attempt to explain the micro-level (inter)actions of agents through identifying specific actions and exploring how they may be connected (or not) to social structure/a chronological chain of previous social (inter)action. Here, emphasis is placed on how athletes also play an important role in exercising influence on their own and others' (inter)actions, how 'relational interactions are manifest in leader-follower dynamics, and how they combine to produce effects that are far more complex than current theorizing [sic] has acknowledged' (Tourish, 2019, p. 233). As such, the primary focus is upon how coaches act and behave, and *how*, *when*, *why*, and *under which circumstances* this influences (or does not influence) others (e.g., athletes).

1.3 Objectives

a) To better understand how relationships between coaching practice and athlete outcomes (i.e., influence) have been conceptualised to date, and how this has implications both for current knowledge and future work (Chapters 2 and 3).

b) To further develop and explain the emerging (micro) sociology of coach-coach and coach-athlete (inter)action/influence, and how this is connected to the dynamic complexities of the broader normative social system (i.e., social structure) (Chapter 6).

c) To identify what social structure in the coaching domain *is* and the potential *mechanism(s)* which explain how coach-athlete (inter)action can both shape and be shaped by social structure and conscious agency (Chapters 4 and 6).

d) To examine the role played by others (e.g., athletes) and specifically *how*, *when*, *why*, and *under which circumstances* (inter)actions with coaches may play a role in influencing (or not) others' actions or behaviours (e.g., performance) through complex structure-agency relations (Chapter 6).

e) To explore the utility of a complex methodological bricolage in line with an emergentist critical realist research philosophy to answer the above objectives (Chapters 4, 5 and 6).

1.4 Structure of the thesis

Overall, the thesis comprises seven chapters. Immediately following the present chapter, Chapter Two provides a broad review of the extant literature in sport coaching. This explores paradigmatic underpinnings to coaching research and also considers both progress achieved and areas requiring further attention. Chapter Three then provides a more focused systematic review of the literature which has explored relationships between coaching practice and athlete "outcomes", before critiquing this literature through the lens of critical realism. Chapter Four then establishes a clearer outline of the core tenets of critical realism and the specific meta-theoretical position underpinning the present work. It is in this chapter that the theoretical framework is first introduced, which is later deployed as a heuristic device. Chapter Five provides a detailed overview of the methodology and specific methods which were used to address the research questions. Nested within this chapter, I explore some of the complexities which were required to be navigated through my role as researcher. I also explain the processes used for data analysis within a critical realist position, as well as considerations for generalisability, quality and rigour. Chapter Six then discusses the findings of the research and critically examines them through the deployment of the theoretical framework and wider supporting theory. The key sections of this chapter reintroduce some of the complexity which has been lacking from much of the sport coaching literature focusing on the influence of the coach. Specifically, the sections explain the actions of athletes in light of how they were shaped (or not) through (inter)actions with others (alongside other entities). Finally, Chapter Seven then brings the thesis to a close by providing an overview of the novel contributions to knowledge, a summary of the central findings and associated implications of these. Future recommendations and reflections on how the research questions have been addressed are also discussed.

Chapter 2: Review of literature

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a broad overview of extant literature within the field of sport coaching and how this has developed. The review is broadly organised chronologically, signposting pertinent paradigmatic lenses through which coaching has been researched, before critically appraising the usefulness and limitations of each position in turn. First, engaging with more frequently utilised paradigmatic standpoints, a discussion of positivist research precedes the consideration of interpretivist-informed work. This is then followed with an analysis of paradigms which have only more recently been introduced and applied to the coaching arena – namely poststructuralism and critical realism. Emanating from the identification of progress achieved through these prevailing paradigms, and aspects of coaching which are still largely untapped (perhaps as a result of limitations with these positions), the section culminates with a consideration of suggested areas for further attention. In particular, implications for the continuation of the present thesis are discussed.

2.2 Positivist-informed sport coaching research

Whether explicitly acknowledged, or through more implicit unconscious means, coaching science research is inevitably shaped by ontological and epistemological assumptions (North, 2013b). Just as coaches themselves have philosophies, or sets of values and beliefs through which their coaching is informed and enacted (Cassidy et al., 2004), researchers are also unable to escape their meta-theoretical assumptions (Rosenburg, 2008). As such, when critically appraising and reviewing coaching literature, it is important to account for the paradigmatic positions of those conducting the research. Without such comprehension, our interpretation of the quality of the work and its usefulness is blind (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). A paradigm can be understood as a lens comprising of interrelated ontological (i.e., how we view the world and the extent of its reality) and epistemological (i.e., how it is possible to know about the world) assumptions (Sparkes, 1992), through which we frame philosophical, conceptual and methodological issues in order to study the world (Filstead, 1979). Before turning to empirical work underpinned by these paradigmatic

considerations, however, it is important to consider the broad foundational calls made for early research in sport coaching, to understand where work in the field may have originated from, and to situate its pre-existing motives or rationales.

Research within sport coaching is believed to have commenced in the early 1900's, and was largely ignited through psychological roots, with Coleman Griffith acting as one of the pioneers or "fathers" of research in this domain (Green, 2003). Papers at this time point made calls for the development of multidisciplinary skills in athletes, incorporating knowledge from physiological and psychological work (Miller, 1927). Further, calls for the professionalisation of coaching as a standalone field, separate from physical education, teaching or administration were made (Degroot, 1950). In rationalising these aims, literature criticised the haphazard state of education and professional preparation programmes for coaches (Bucher, 1959; Sterner, 1951). This small body of work suggested that good coaching concerned the possession of expert knowledge, understanding of the player, pedagogical components and appropriate personality and character traits, however, few coach education regimes addressed these components. Resultantly, a blend of training and experience was recommended as the most fruitful course of action to educate coaches. Likening the role of coaches to that of a surgeon, Bucher (1959) suggested that stakeholders would not be satisfied with preparation for the role consisting of only experience through trial and error. In direct contrast to the earlier claim of Degroot (1950) that coaching should break away from the fields of education and administration, it was advocated by some that early training for the coaching of physical activities should commence with upskilling beginner teachers as coaches (Sterner, 1951).

Wilt (1961) later provided an overview of a British track and field athletics coach training programme, suggesting that more senior coaches should provide training to coaches from around the country through lecturing, demonstration, and dissemination of the latest technical information, through authoring booklets, and through examining and providing feedback to their peers. Moreover, this paper hinted toward the possibility that more informal learning through discussion in cafes and bars could provide a highly valuable medium for coach development. The notion of coaching taking place within a set of guiding values and beliefs (philosophy) was developed around this time frame,

with Ashenfelter (1965) compiling an auto-ethnographic account of his personal views on coaching within a high school environment. Principally, this account presented the view that coaching should focus on developing the individual, within their nuanced genetic capability and motives, instead of focusing upon winning at all costs. What was lacking from all of the abovementioned work, however, was an empirical base from which such training and education could be built.

Emanating from such propositional, as opposed to empirical work, coaching scholars recognised the need for a research-informed evidence base. For example, Smith et al. (1978, p. 174) contended: 'research pertaining to coaching behaviors [sic] and their influence on children is virtually nonexistent'. Consequently, researchers around this time point commenced a pursuit of understanding behaviours employed by coaches and their effectiveness, principally through means of observation and self-report measures. A large portion of research from this point onward was implemented through the positivist paradigm. This philosophical position ontologically views a real world, which we can measure and understand objectively through our senses and engagement with experiment (Mallett & Tinning, 2014; Rosenburg, 2008). Accordingly, events are typically seen as being explained by preceding events and assumed (not directly observable) conformity to laws (Danermark, Ekström, Jakobsen, & Karlsson, 1997). Predominantly through (although not confined to) quantitative methods, positivism seeks to systematically control and predict variables in order to test and confirm or falsify hypotheses, often using statistical tests (i.e., correlation/regression to identify relationships or levels of acceptance/statistical significance; St. Pierre, 2016). Following of this logic, and stemming from behaviourist psychological roots, coaching scholars have measured and observed behaviours of coaches, in view of constructing and implementing interventions to enhance the development of specific athlete outcomes.

Seminal work in this area was conducted by Tharp and Gallimore (1976) who investigated the practices of a 'master teacher' in the well-respected and renowned figure of basketball coach John Wooden. The aim of this work was to study a coach who was perceived to be an 'expert' in light of his win record and credentials, in order to better our understanding of human learning and propose pedagogical strategies for other coaches and teachers to implement. Through participant

observation using a coding system adapted from the educational context, Tharp and Gallimore coded behaviours of John Wooden's practice within training sessions. Key findings reported that 50.3 per cent of his overall communication comprised instruction, with other prominent behaviours (of considerably lower frequencies) including hustle (12.7%), scold/reinstruction (8%) and praise (6.9%). Researchers also found that at least 75 per cent of total behaviour was delivered containing information (including instruction within other behaviour categories – e.g., scold/reinstruction). While this work provided a useful understanding of behaviours utilised by a senior coach at an elite level of performance, the effectiveness of such behaviour and its pedagogical worthiness for athletes was uncritically assumed. For example, it was postulated that because the athletes in this context were close to positions of fame and high financial reward, they would all have a high motivational desire to succeed and thus the coach's comparatively low use of praise was an effective strategy to employ. Although Tharp and Gallimore (1976) recognised that the proportion of behaviours delivered toward individual athletes often differed in frequency: 'individual praises and scolds were about equal in number, but there was enormous variation from man to man. Some players were mostly praised, some mostly scolded. Some got lots of both, and some hardly any at all' (p. 77) and that it was 'also obvious that Wooden's off-court relationship with the players' was 'a factor in the player response to his teaching' (p. 77), this study lacked a critical interpretive dimension to then explore such nuanced meaning and sense-making of how the coach's interactions were *perceived* from both coaches' and athletes' perspectives.

This work was then succeeded by research which adopted the cognitive-behavioural model to investigate how specific behaviours delivered by coaches influenced the behaviour, attitudes and outcomes of participants (Curtis, Smith, & Smoll, 1979; Smith et al., 1978). Specifically, the cognitive-behavioural theoretical framework implies that effect of coach behaviour is mediated by the perception, recall and meaning made of such behaviours by athletes. The most prominent and cited example of work employing this framework was conducted by Smith et al. (1978). Using the Coaching Behavior Assessment System (CBAS) which was developed the previous year by Smith, Smoll, and Hunt (1977), Smith et al. (1978) asked observers, who were trained in using the system

and assessed for reliability, to establish an 'independent' assessment of coach behaviour within a children's baseball league (minors – 8-9 year old, majors – 10-12 year old, and seniors – 13-15 year old). Further, coaches were asked to complete a Coaching Philosophy Questionnaire, which established the relative importance of coaching objectives and goals to each individual coach, and the perceived importance of these same goals for players. Coaches were also asked on a self-report basis how often they engaged in the behaviours highlighted on the CBAS.

Players of the squad were asked to complete a structured interview, where they were required to indicate how frequently their coach had engaged with behaviours exhibited on the CBAS. They also worked through a survey to report their reactions to participation (e.g., how much do you like your coach?) and their levels of self-esteem. Both the interview and survey were conducted upon completion of the season, and thus collected *general* data (i.e., requiring the player to recall generic coach behaviour and personal perceptions over the course of the whole season). While enabling the research to capture a large number of athlete responses (n = 542), the timing of this data collection and asking for reports of general data (i.e., how frequently the coach had utilised a specific behaviour in general) as opposed to more specific, immediate coach behaviour, was likely to have decreased the ability of players to effectively remember such instances (Lyle, 2003). Further, given data collection was only carried out at the completion of the season, this is likely to have provided only a snapshot of the athletes' responses, which had the potential to be heavily influenced by their emotional state at the time of reporting (Schwarz & Clore, 1983), as opposed to when the coaching practice was itself delivered.

Results of this early work reported that of coaches studied, the most prevalent observed behaviours were reinforcement, general technical instruction and general encouragement (Smith et al., 1978). With the exception of the assessment of punishment, correlations between coach perceptions of their own behaviour and independent observations of coaches' behaviour were not significant. This remained true for correlations between coach and athlete perceptions of coaching behaviour. Comparatively, athletes were able to more effectively detect behaviours which were congruent with behaviours as assessed by observers. Specifically, punitive behaviours, mistake-

contingent technical instruction and general communication were found to yield significant correlation coefficients in this regard. Interestingly then, coaches' perceptions of their own practice were often found to differ from athlete and observer perceptions of the same practice. Therefore, it is plausible to suggest that interpretations of the effectiveness of coaching practice (its influence) could also be divergent when contrasting perceptions of multiple stakeholders.

When interpreting the relationship between coach behaviour and athlete outcomes, coaches who delivered more technical instruction were perceived more positively by athletes than coaches who delivered more general encouragement and communication, especially for players who were low in self-esteem. Athletes who received more technical forms of instruction were also found to interpret their teammates and the sport in a more positive light. Relationships between coach behaviour and levels of self-esteem were equivocal. Here, athletes who played for coaches high in technical instruction had a significantly lower mean rating of their own baseball ability, with no differences being found for general self-esteem. Further, players who experienced high levels of reinforcement and mistake-related encouragement had significantly higher levels of general self-esteem at the end of the season (Smith et al., 1978).

The abovementioned work which was constructed and analysed through the theoretical framework of the cognitive-behavioural model (Smoll, Smith, Curtis, & Hunt, 1978), implies that interpretation is *key* to athletes' evaluative reactions of practice. However, ironically, given the positivist, reductionist paradigm employed to guide the methodology and analysis, *individual* athlete interpretation was widely negated in these studies. The picture painted by the work and statistical analyses instead provides us with an understanding of how coach behaviour was likely to be related to athlete outcomes (e.g., self-esteem), in the majority of cases for the given population, at that specific time. If we observe the highly equivocal nature of these findings, (e.g., the different correlations presented between coach-, athlete- and observer-perceptions of coach behaviour and athlete outcome measures, and the difference in correlations from the 1976 to the 1977 data), this highlights the ability of coaching practice to exert a heterogeneous influence on different athletes, and under different circumstances, reinforcing the need to investigate interpretation at a more

individual level. As a result, notwithstanding the large battery of measurements taken and volume of statistical tests implemented within the work, we are unable to detect nuanced athlete interpretation of coach behaviour. Arguably, analyses therefore render themselves to be of little use to coaching practitioners, who may remain confused as to how their practice should be best informed by the equivocal findings.

Later, work of a similar nature by Lacy and Darst (1985), conducting systematic observation of winning high school football coaches using the Arizona State University Observation Instrument (ASUOI; Lacy & Darst, 1984), also implied that coach behaviour was likely to significantly differ within different phases of sessions, as well as between different time points across a season. Demonstrating this, levels of praise, scold, instruction and positive modelling used by coaches were found to have significant differences from pre-season, to both early season and late season time points. Further, the use of hustle by coaches was found to be greater in the warm-up and conditioning segments of sessions, when compared to team and group activities. Although this study observed coaches within training sessions and the work of Smith et al. (1978) and Curtis et al. (1979) observed coaches in matches alone, the differences point to an interesting consideration. Given the two earlier baseball studies grouped coach behaviour more homogeneously (i.e., they aggregated coach behaviour use over the whole season), as opposed to breaking the analysis of behaviour down into specific time points of matches or the season, this may have ignored important implications for the implementation of findings into coach training programmes. For instance, the delivery of different coach behaviour may have varied at different time points in matches, or indeed over the course of the season, depending upon contextual conditions (e.g., score lines, league table positioning, or changes in goals) (Chaumeton & Duda, 1988). This could have resulted in interpretations of coaching practice under these different circumstances being widely varied at different time points, however, this was not accounted for.

Emanating from the two earlier introduced influential pieces of work (Curtis et al., 1979; Smith et al., 1978), and in line with positivist logic, Smith et al. (1978) decided that it was essential 'to experimentally manipulate coaching behaviors [sic] and measure the effects of such manipulation

on childrens' reactions' (p. 199), in order to bring wider impact to their findings. However, acknowledging the limits of their own ambition, the authors recognised it was highly unlikely to be able to 'programme' coaches to behave in certain ways. Correspondingly, experimental coach education sessions based on the previous empirical findings, known as coach effectiveness training (CET), were designed (Smoll & Smith, 1980), implemented, and themselves empirically investigated (Barnett, Smoll, & Smith, 1992; Smith et al., 1979; Smoll, Smith, Barnett, & Everett, 1993) using behaviour change mechanisms, in attempts to upskill coaches on *likely* methods to create positive experiences for participants (Smith et al., 1978). These studies all utilised an experimental design, including a group of coaches who received CET, as well as a control group consisting of coaches who continued to coach as normal, receiving no structured CET support. This specific CET workshop had a fundamental aim of prescriptively instructing coaches to increase their use of reinforcement, encouragement after mistakes, corrective instruction and technical instruction, while decreasing their use of nonreinforcement (not responding to positive performance or effort), punishment, punitive instruction, or behaviours related to keeping control of the activity (Smith et al., 1979). Workshops were delivered through both verbal and visual means, with the facilitators furnishing participants with a booklet to reinforce the core principles.

Three principal studies looked to assess the efficacy of the CET programme, in terms of its impact on coaching practice and the subsequent influence on athletes, with each study maintaining a slightly nuanced focus. Smith et al. (1979) were mainly interested in the development of relationship skills, Smoll et al. (1993) focused predominantly on levels of self-esteem, while Barnett et al. (1992) principally investigated levels of dropout from sport. For example, Barnett et al. (1992) conducted their study, implementing a two-phase design with 18 coaches and 202 baseball players, of which eight teams were assigned to an experimental group and 10 teams were allocated to a control (no-treatment) group. Throughout phase one coaches received the CET (or no-treatment) and researchers conducted questionnaires with players before and after the season to investigate pre- and post-season self-esteem levels (using the Washington Self-Description Questionnaire). Post-season perceptions of coach behaviour and sport experience were also measured. In phase two, one year after the CET,

parents of the children (n = 188, 93% of original sample) were contacted by telephone to assess if their child was still participating within baseball, or if they had dropped out of the sport. If the child had dropped out of baseball, a revised Sport Participation Questionnaire (Seefeldt, Ewing, Hylka, Trevor, & Walk, 1989) was administered to understand reasons for attrition. Key findings of this work relating to phase one indicated that athletes of coaches who had participated within the CET rated coaches more highly in terms of using desirable behaviours, and lower in terms of using punitive or unresponsive behaviour forms than the non-experimental group. Although CET and non-experimental group players were not different in their liking of the sport or their perceptions of coaches' knowledge, CET coaches were perceived to be better teachers. Athletes who were coached by experimental group coaches felt they had more fun when playing the sport, and perceived their coaches to like them more. They also experienced higher levels of interpersonal attraction to their teammates. Pre-season self-esteem scores were highly similar between groups, whereas an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) highlighted that players with low self-esteem, playing for CET-trained coaches had significantly higher post-season scores. Moreover, when looking at pre- to post-season changes to self-esteem scores, for athletes with low self-esteem, those in the experimental group experienced a significant increase in self-esteem, while those in the control group had no significant change in scores.

In terms of the influence of the CET programme on attrition levels, Barnett et al. (1992) reported that of athletes coached within the experimental group, 95 per cent were still playing at the phase two follow-up. Conversely, 74 per cent of athletes coached by control group coaches were still participating at phase two. Through exploratory examination, players who had dropped out were generally identified as having done so because of a conflicting interest, or as a result of features of the sport or situation making them unhappy. Predominantly, reasons for dropout given by players of coaches who were trained through the CET group pertained more to conflicts of interest. Specifically, most frequent answers were a lack of interest, changing preferences, or an inconvenience. On the other hand, principal reasons given for attribution from athletes coached by non-experimental coaches were associated with aversive-affective experiences (e.g., lack of fun, stress, or

unsatisfactory interpersonal evaluation) (Barnett et al., 1992). These results should be treated with caution, however, as they were based upon extremely small sample sizes for those who had dropped out of the sport.

While this abovementioned early interventional work should be applauded for its attempt to engage with and enhance the development of positive outcomes in athletes through upskilling the coaching workforce, there are limitations which must be acknowledged as a result of the methodological and philosophical position adopted. Much alike medics prescribing a drug in light of empirical evidence which suggests that it will be efficacious in the majority of cases, these studies adopted a similar (positivist) philosophy. Through encouraging coaches to make use of specific behaviours (while downregulating the use of other behaviours), it was envisioned that the practice would have a positive influence on the majority of athletes concerned. We know that the operationalisation of coaching practice and its influence on athletes - an inherently social affair (Jones, Potrac, Cushion, & Ronglan, 2011) - is not likely to produce outcomes in this way. Instead, the influence of coaching is a complex, contested and multifaceted process (Jones et al., 2013). The logic of prescriptive imposition, as utilised in the design of the CET programmes, precludes and diminishes the development of individual coach innovation and critical reflection in order to idiosyncratically meet the needs of individual learners. Instead, it promotes and reinforces the illusion of a blanket-like, golden bullet approach being effective, which contributes toward and perpetuates standardised, technocratic forms of coach education (Townsend & Cushion, 2017).

Around the same time as this more broad behavioural work, a line of inquiry focused explicitly on the leadership behaviours of coaches was commenced (Chelladurai, 1978; Chelladurai & Carron, 1978). In line with the view that coaching (or leadership) behaviour should differ depending upon the needs of individuals and the situation presented, as opposed to 'blanket' like approaches, this work culminated in the proposition of a multidimensional model of leadership (Chelladurai, 1980). Notably, this model posited that the level of congruence between preferred behaviour (i.e., by athletes) and required behaviour (i.e., of the task), being addressed in the

implementation of the coach's actual behaviour (i.e., what coaches do), has implications for levels of athlete performance and/or satisfaction (Figure 1.0.).

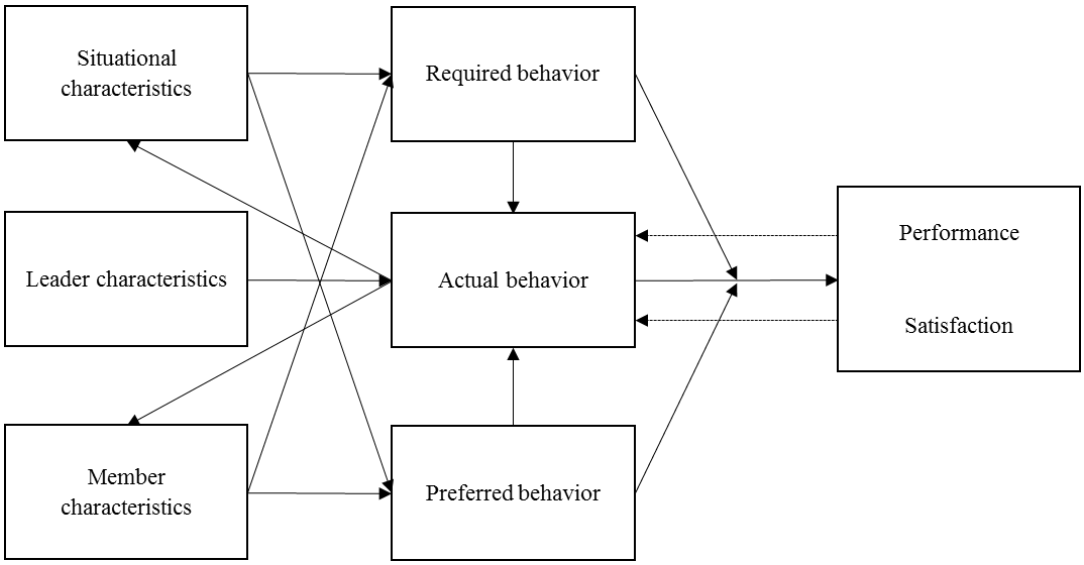

Figure 1.0. Multidimensional model of leadership (adapted from Chelladurai, 1980)

The model also included situational characteristics comprising goals of athletes, the type of task being faced, and the social context of the group. These situational characteristics were stated as factors that, alongside the characteristics of athletes – member characteristics – (e.g., personality), determined the required behaviour of the coach. Preferred behaviour, as put forward in the model, is primarily concerned with behaviour that is viewed as being desirable in the eyes of the athlete depending upon their individual characteristics (e.g., personality, ability and need for achievement). Preferred behaviour can also be influenced by specific situational characteristics. The actual behaviour of the coach is argued to be dependent upon the coach's characteristics (i.e., expertise, personality and experience). Actual behaviour is also assumed to be shaped by required behaviour and preferred behaviour of the task, as well as by characteristics of the situation/athletes. The 'congruence' element of this model suggests that coaches constantly weigh up the degree to which preferred and required behaviour can or should be employed, in order to satisfy the needs of athletes and their performance. Where coaches focus more on requirements of the task, as opposed to athlete preferences, this is likely to result in high performance, but low levels of satisfaction. Whereas, if the coach delivers more preferred behaviour and focuses less on the required behaviour of the activity,

this is more likely to lead to high satisfaction, but low levels of performance. Two feedback loops are also included within the multidimensional model which propose that the leader (coach) is likely to change their behaviour as a result of levels of athlete attainment/performance, or levels of athlete satisfaction. Crucially, what is not emphasised, however, is how coaches detect such instances in order to correspondingly change their behaviour.

In conjunction with this model, and to test the robustness of its constructs in terms of matching the realities of coaching practice, Chelladurai and Saleh (1980) developed and validated the Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS). Using this scale, studies have attempted to explore differences between preferred and perceived dimensions of coach behaviour in different populations, and also how this may be related to satisfaction and personal outcomes in athletes (Chelladurai, 1984; Chelladurai & Carron, 1983; Chelladurai, Imamura, Yamaguchi, Oinuma, & Miyauchi, 1988; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978). For example, Chelladurai et al. (1988) investigated differences between perceived and preferred coach behaviour, as well as satisfactions with leadership and personal outcomes. Specifically, relationships between coach behaviour and satisfaction between Japanese and Canadian university male athletes were examined. Recruiting 115 Japanese and 100 Canadian (badminton, basketball, hockey, swimming, track and field, volleyball, and wrestling) athletes, the study asked participants to complete preferred and perceived versions of the LSS, as well as a satisfaction scale before subjecting the data to regression and correlational analyses. Key findings of this work indicated that Canadian athletes preferred significantly more training and instruction than Japanese athletes, whereas Japanese participants preferred significantly more social support and autocratic behaviour than Canadian athletes. Preferred levels of democratic behaviour and positive feedback were not found to be significantly different between the two groups. In terms of perceived behaviours, Canadian athletes perceived their coaches to utilise significantly more training and instruction, positive feedback, and democratic behaviour than Japanese athletes. Conversely, Japanese athletes perceived coaches to use significantly more autocratic behaviour when compared to Canadian athletes' perceptions. Levels of perceived social support used by coaches did not significantly differ between the two sample populations. In addition, Canadian athletes were

significantly (statistically) more satisfied, when compared with Japanese athletes, in terms of both satisfaction with leadership received and personal outcomes.

When analysing the individual and collective influence of coach behaviour on satisfaction, perceived leadership behaviours (i.e., training and instruction, democratic behaviour, autocratic behaviour, social support and positive feedback) were all found to be significantly correlated with *satisfaction with leadership* in both Canadian and Japanese athletes. Specifically, higher levels of training and instruction, democratic behaviour, social support and positive feedback were associated with higher levels of *satisfaction with leadership*. Meanwhile, lower levels of autocratic behaviour were associated with higher levels of *satisfaction with leadership*. Behaviours together, explained 57% and 41% of the variance in the Canadian and Japanese data sets, respectively. Autocratic behaviour and training and instruction were found to significantly contribute to *satisfaction with leadership* as standalone contributors for the Japanese sample, while training and instruction and positive feedback were significant unique contributors to *satisfaction with leadership* in the Canadian athletes.

For Japanese athletes, all leadership behaviours except positive feedback were significantly correlated with athletes' *satisfaction with personal outcome*. Again, autocratic behaviour was negatively correlated, meaning lower levels of this leadership behaviour were correlated with higher levels of *personal outcome satisfaction*. In contrast, for the Canadian athletes, only training and instruction from the coach was significantly positively correlated with *personal outcome satisfaction*. Leadership behaviours jointly accounted for 9% and 13% of the variance in *personal outcome satisfaction* for Canadian, and Japanese samples, respectively. Looking at leadership behaviours as unique contributors toward *personal outcome satisfaction*, social support was a statistically significant component in the Japanese sample, whereas training and instruction was the only unique statistically significant contributor in the Canadian subgroup (Chelladurai et al., 1988). Problematically, the design of these studies portray coaches as agents who stand apart from complexity, can easily 'deploy' specific behaviours (e.g., positive feedback) with different athlete populations, and in doing so bring about positive outcomes (e.g., satisfaction). As such, nuances of

daily (inter)action, inclusive of *how* and *why* these behaviours are used by coaches and then interpreted by individual athletes is omitted. Crucially, this means that findings remain divorced from the realities of practice for coaches and athletes.

Many further attempts to quantitatively measure coach behaviour and its relationship to athlete outcomes were made throughout the 1980's, 1990's and beyond. In alignment with much of the earlier work (discussed above), these studies typically used positivist quantitative epistemologies, aiming to understand how athletes from different populations received, perceived and were affected by coaches' practice (e.g., Baker, Côté, & Hawes, 2000; Gardner, Shields, Bredemeier, & Bostrom, 1996; Kenow & Williams, 1999; Kenow & Williams, 1992; Markland & Martinek, 1988; Shields, Gardner, Bredemeier, & Bostro, 1997; Solomon et al., 1996; Williams et al., 2003). For example, Markland and Martinek (1988) discovered that players who assumed different roles in the team (e.g., starters, non-starters) received different levels of coach behaviour. Further, Kenow and Williams (1992) developed the Coach Behavior Questionnaire (CBQ) and reported that athletes who had high levels of state and trait anxiety, and were low in state self-confidence, perceived coach behaviour more negatively. Solomon et al. (1996) identified that high expectancy players (i.e., those who expect to perform well) perceived coach behaviour more positively than low expectancy athletes. Exploring group cohesion, Shields et al. (1997) found that at an individual level, perceived coach behaviour (derived through the LSS) was strongly correlated to task cohesion, with all behaviours being significantly positively (training and instruction, democratic behaviour, social support and positive feedback) or negatively (autocratic behaviour) correlated for both males and females. These findings remained true when assessing the influence of coach behaviour at a team level. When assessing the influence of coach behaviour on social forms of cohesion, however, findings were more equivocal for different behaviours, and between genders. Another example of research in this area included the use of the Coaching Behavior Scale for Sport (CBS-S) by Baker et al. (2000) who found that negative personal rapport from the coach was a significant predictor of all forms of athlete anxiety, and competition strategies of the coach were a significant predictor of total anxiety, worry, and disruption of concentration for athletes.

In comparison to the earlier introduced work of Smith and colleagues (Curtis et al., 1979; Smith et al., 1978), this focus on leadership and broader behaviour has extended our knowledge of how coach behaviour (in terms of its preferred and perceived dimensions) often differs between different groups of athletes (e.g., by gender, stage of maturity, geographical location, sports and type of activities). However, while this perspective increases the scope for research to capture heterogeneity, critically, the groups identified still provide a somewhat homogeneous representation of the respective athlete populations. For example, through positivist methodology, and principally correlational or regression analyses, the work implies that, in the majority of cases, all athletes from a specific demographic population (e.g., type of activity) are likely to perceive and prefer coach behaviour in a specific manner (e.g., that Canadian athletes prefer more training and instruction behaviour compared to Japanese athletes). Consequently, despite additional research supporting the abovementioned findings that preferences for, and perceptions of, coach behaviour, are likely to be differential depending upon demographic components (e.g., Case, 1987; House & Dessler, 1974; Terry, 1984; Terry & Howe, 1984), this sector of coaching research still lacks the ability to understand *how*, *when* and *why* such coach behaviour is preferred, or related to specific outcomes *at the level of the individual*. The very fact that athletes often occupy several of these population 'labels' at one time (e.g., they come from a specific country, may move between levels of competitive standard, and may participate in more than one type of activity), suggests that research which is able to better capture the complexities of individual athletes, in various situations (Jambor & Zhang, 1997), and how this determines the way in which they interpret and are influenced by coaching practice is required. How athletes think, feel and act is likely to continually fluctuate under a range of different circumstances, which may also play a role in the interpretation of coaching practice, for example (Blumer, 1969).

Extending beyond largely quantitative behavioural and psychologically centred work, an example of qualitative positivist empirical work conducted in-situ, was later implemented by French researchers Saury and Durand (1998). Using participant observation of five training sessions and in-depth interviews with coaches, Saury and Durand (1998) attempted to understand the practical

knowledge of expert sailing coaches from a cognitive ergonomic approach, through the task activity model (Rasmussen, 1986). Heavily criticising previous rationalistic, systematic, and generalisable models, the authors suggested that coaching was instead concerned with flexibly adapting to sets of interacting constraints. For example, Saury and Durand (1998) were critical of the coaching model put forward by Côté, Salmela, Trudel, Baria, and Russell (1995) on the basis that the tasks which coaches encounter cannot be completely specified or comprehended in advance. Moreover, it was highlighted that 'different individuals faced with the same task do not necessarily act in the same way' (Saury & Durand, 1998, p. 255). As such, although coaching models present us with an opportunity to appreciate that coaches' personal characteristics can influence organisation, training or competition activities, they do not deal with the operational element of coaching (i.e., how practical knowledge of coaches is utilised as they conduct activity; Saury and Durand, 1998).

Working with five expert coaches, Saury and Durand (1998) attempted to redress the omission in the literature of how practical knowledge may be utilised in implementing specific coaching actions. Making use of methodology which involved the verbalisation of actions, memory elicitation, and semi-structured interviews, verified by in-situ participant observation, the work detected constraints that characterised coaching activities within training sessions, and the cognitive capacity of coaches when facing such constraints. The primary constraints which coaches were required to navigate were found to include: (a) principles of training efficiency (e.g., attainment of targeted activity being dependent upon organisational resources and arrangements, the order in which tasks are put together for athletes to complete, the capacity for training activities to be affected by weather conditions, and adherence to competition requirements), (b) situating coaching actions in time (e.g., understanding when the right time to deliver coaching behaviour is so as to not hinder or negatively influence athletes, and negotiating contested athlete goals), and (c) uncertainty as an inherent feature of athletes' actions (e.g., unpredictable levels of athlete motivation, effort and expectations as perceived by the coach). In attempt to deal with such constraints, coaches were found to: (a) use organisational routines, (b) anticipate (cognitively) based on flexible plans, (c) adapt plans in the event of unforeseen circumstances, (d) collectively control training (with athletes), and (e)

implement action or behaviour through reference to prior experiences and knowledge (Saury & Durand, 1998). This work represents an important shift away from more functionalistic representations of coaching. For the present thesis, it foregrounds the need to consider coaches' actions when working with inherent uncertainty in order be influential. Despite this promising approach, the central focus of the study was based on the actions of the coach. Resultantly, the relational (inter)actions of coaches *with* athletes to manage uncertainty were somewhat ignored.

In extending this fruitful line of more sophisticated inquiry, a small number of researchers have attempted to investigate both coaches' *and* athletes' perceptions of interactions (e.g., d'Arripe-Longueville, Saury, Fournier, & Durand, 2001; d'Arripe-Longueville, Fournier, & Dubois, 1998). For instance, in using in-depth interviews and analysis through a grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), d'Arripe-Longueville et al. (1998) revealed that the three expert judo coaches with whom they worked utilised an interaction style which was highly authoritative, and employed a variety of strategies (e.g., stimulating rivalry between athletes and entering into direct conflict with athletes) to meet their goals of producing high performing athletes. Six female athletes reported their main style of interaction to be related to their perceived autonomy to satisfy their personal needs (e.g., through soliciting feedback from different coaches and regularly attending training in attempt to achieve exceptional performance). Shared goals among both coaches and athletes were to achieve world domination (i.e., for French judo athletes to be the best in the world), to be successful in the selection process, and to optimise performance. These goals and their related interaction strategies were conceived of as fitting within the historicity of the wider French judo system, and, as such, were viewed as being effective in achieving their desired ends. In particular, where coaches promoted rivalry, provoked athletes, displayed indifference and entered into direct conflict, this led to athletes accepting unequal treatment and aiming to achieve exceptional performance standards. In order to enhance performance, coaches were reported attempting to develop team cohesion by presenting athletes with challenging situations and displaying favouritism toward some athletes. Athletes, in turn, were reported to solicit information from diverse sources (i.e., coaches and others outside of

the coaching context), and in doing so bypassed conventional rules of the environment (d'Arripe-Longueville et al., 1998).

This work, then, provided a novel exploration of coach-athlete interaction to the literature, specifically focusing upon why stakeholders acted as they did. Importantly, it considered the interactions of both coaches and athletes, in response to one another. Notwithstanding the significant contribution offered by this more sophisticated work in accounting for temporal interaction between different stakeholders, these studies often failed to account for *why* agents acted (or did not act) in light of (inter)actions with others. For instance, d'Arripe-Longueville et al. (2001) suggested that the coach's action was characterised by analysing performance decrements and intervention, while athletes' courses of action constituted autonomy and help-seeking. This resulted in collective courses of action where cooperation was either reached immediately due to shared perceptions, or through negotiation (d'Arripe-Longueville et al., 2001). Critically, then, despite providing novel insights into the temporal and connected actions of coaches and athletes, these studies did not explore *if*, *how* or *why* it was the specific previous (inter)action employed by the coach or athlete that was influential. We are only able to infer that specific (inter)actions had succeeded previous (inter)actions.

Building upon this premillennial work, the influence of positivism is still evident in sport coaching literature today. More contemporary work in this area has continued to explore similar lines of research as those introduced above. For example, a behavioural focus considering relationships between coach behaviour and athlete outcomes, and assessments of the effectiveness of coach training programmes devised from such findings have been continued (e.g., Cumming, Smith, & Smoll, 2006; Sousa, Smith, & Cruz, 2008). Most notably, the content of this work has seen a large shift toward aiming to obtain an understanding of the influence of motivational climates produced by coaches (sometimes intended to be shaped through coach effectiveness training) on athletes' levels of motivation (e.g., Fransen, Boen, Vansteenkiste, Mertens, & Vande Broek, 2018; O'Rourke, Smith, Smoll, & Cumming, 2014; Reinboth & Duda, 2006; Vazou, Ntoumanis, & Duda, 2006; Weiss, Amorose, & Wilko, 2009), positive development (e.g., Gould, Flett, & Lauer, 2012; MacDonald, Côté, Eys, & Deakin, 2011), competence (e.g., Fransen et al., 2018; Jaakkola,

Ntoumanis, & Liukkonen, 2016; Weiss et al., 2009), enjoyment (e.g., Jaakkola et al., 2016; MacDonald et al., 2011; Weiss et al., 2009), self-esteem (e.g., O'Rourke et al., 2014), anxiety (e.g., O'Rourke et al., 2014; Smith et al., 2007), coping skills (e.g., Gano-Overway et al., 2017), goal directions (e.g., Jaakkola et al., 2016; Smith, Smoll, & Cumming, 2009; Smoll, Smith, & Cumming, 2007), wellbeing (e.g., Ntoumanis et al., 2012; Reinboth & Duda, 2004, 2006), dropout (e.g., Sarrazin, Vallerand, Guillet, Pelletier, & Cury, 2002) and performance-based outcomes (e.g., Cumming, Smoll, Smith, & Grossbard, 2007; Fransen et al., 2018). Findings from this work are equivocal in nature. In general, task-oriented, or more autonomy-supportive motivational climates have been highlighted as being more beneficial for a range of positive outcomes (e.g., perceived competence, self-esteem, performance, intrinsic motivation, positive moral attitudes; Harwood, Keegan, Smith, & Raine, 2015), when compared to ego-oriented, or more controlling motivational climates (Bartholomew, Ntoumanis, & Thøgersen-Ntoumani, 2009).

Alternatively, postmillennial positivist research has also studied previously untapped components of coaching. For instance, this has encompassed a closer focus on the coach-athlete relationship. Specifically, Jowett and Meek (2000) built upon the definition of interpersonal relationships created by Kelley et al. (1983) to create a conceptual model of the coach-athlete relationship which was comprised of closeness, co-orientation, and complementarity; also widely known as the 3 C's. The 3 C's model was subsequently used to study the coach-athlete relationship in a niche population – coaches and athletes who were married couples (Jowett & Meek, 2000). Using in-depth qualitative interviews this study deductively coded coach and athlete responses relating to the three aspects of the conceptual model. Second, frequency analysis was used by the authors to determine the volume of participants who had responded with one of the second order themes. Jowett and Meek (2000) identified that generic and personal feelings were key markers of closeness. Understanding and shared knowledge were aspects which explicated the co-orientation construct, and complementarity was most frequently characterised by the position of the coach in authority and the athlete in conformity. Further, interdependency between the three aspects of the

conceptual model (i.e., interactions between closeness, co-orientation and complementarity) was stated to be a common feature of the analysis.

Investigation into the coach-athlete relationship was then furthered, with Jowett and Cockerill (2003) aiming to understand how the constructs of the 3 C's applied within Olympic settings, and Jowett (2003) looking into the application of the same model within more dysfunctional coach-athlete relationships. Later, this work was also applied by Philippe and Seiler (2006) in an elite male swimming population, before the model was adapted and accompanied with an additional research tool to explore the influence of the coach-athlete relationship on a range of athlete outcomes. Namely, the 3 C's model was extended into the 3+1Cs model to include closeness, complementarity, co-orientation and commitment (Jowett, 2007a; Jowett, 2007b). This model was developed alongside the inception of the Coach-Athlete Relationship Questionnaire (CART-Q) (Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004). With its two modalities, the CART-Q is able to measure coach athlete relationships from both a *personal* perspective (e.g., the extent to which the individual is satisfied with their coach or athlete) and a *meta*-perspective (e.g., the extent to which the coach or athlete thinks their counterpart is satisfied with themselves). Again, within positivist epistemologies, studies have been conducted using this questionnaire, attempting to establish connections between coach-athlete relationships and athlete outcomes, for instance team cohesion (Jowett & Chaundy, 2004) and passion for sport (Lafrenière, Jowett, Vallerand, & Carbonneau, 2011). Despite providing useful insights that the quality of the coach-athlete relationship contributes to the impact of a coach's leadership, these studies still portray coaches as agents who largely stand apart from complexity, and are capable of 'deploying' behaviours to foster positive relationships and thus generate desirable outcomes in athletes. Critically, they fail to account for everyday situated interactions, negotiations and relations and how these are experienced by different individuals (e.g., coaches and athletes) in terms of their (non)influence.

Another more contemporary area of research has explored manipulations to session/match design (e.g., playing area, or number of players) and the influence that this may have on athletes' tactical or technical performance (e.g., Gonçalves et al., 2017; Sampaio, Lago, Gonçalves, Maçãs, &

Leite, 2014; Silva, Garganta, Santos, & Teoldo, 2014; Silva, Aguiar, et al., 2014) or physiological (e.g., Brandes, Müller, & Heitmann, 2017; Gonçalves et al., 2017; Rampinini et al., 2007; Sampaio et al., 2014; Vaz, Gonçalves, Figueira, & Garcia, 2016) outcomes. Reviews in this area have highlighted that although findings are equivocal, there appears to be a trend: increases in small sided game intensity and physiological exertion are associated with reduced player numbers and a relative increase in playing area of the pitch (Hill-Haas, Dawson, Impellizzeri, & Coutts, 2011). Further, wide changes in tactical or technical behaviour are apparent within different pitch sizes and involving different numbers of personnel (Aguiar, Botelho, Lago, Maças, & Sampaio, 2012). However, many of these studies have tended to be very prescriptive in terms of what coaches can and cannot do throughout activity. For example, they have sought to constrain coaches' behaviour through asking coaches not to encourage or provide support to their athletes, so as to control for the possible influence of coach behaviour on the results (e.g., Rebelo, Silva, Rago, Barreira, & Krustrup, 2016; Silva, Aguiar, et al., 2014; Vaz et al., 2016). Perhaps more attention should be focused on the role that coaching practice plays in shaping particular athlete outcomes, as opposed to viewing the practices of coaches as an extraneous variable which should be controlled for. Clearly, the manner in which coach behaviour had been constrained and manipulated in these studies lacked ecological validity; the methodological approaches did not represent naturalistic coaching environments (Abraham, Collins, & Martindale, 2006).

Overall, positivism has valuably contributed to, and progressed our understanding of coaching. Indeed, work in this paradigm was first to put coaching research 'on the map'. Specifically, the paradigm has allowed us to appreciate the behaviours utilised by coaches (through perceptions and independent observations) and that these behaviours may be related to specific outcomes of athletes. In light of such findings, positivist-informed work has also explored the utility of specific coach education interventions tailored to manipulate broad elements of 'effective' coach behaviour, in order to positively influence athletes. However, paradoxically, research in this area has also frequently pointed to the notion that coach behaviour and its effectiveness is likely to change as a function of contextual features (e.g., the time-point in the season or session, nationalities of different

athletes, or between different types of activity). Ironically, then, findings from positivist-informed work have somewhat contributed to the demise (of the utility) of the very paradigm to which they belong. In other words, because studies attempting to answer their research questions from a positivist stance have tended to homogenise or group athletes to understand the influence of coach behaviour on different populations, they have denied the very interpretation at an individual level, which they point to as being a necessary feature of coaching-oriented work.

Although positivist-informed work has undoubtedly advanced the field, many scholars have suggested that in order to undertake more meaningful research which delves deeper into the realities of coaching, we must move away from the reductionist logic of positivism (Cushion, 2007; Cushion et al., 2006; Gearity & Metzger, 2017; Hemmestad et al., 2010; North, 2013b; Piggott, 2015). The heavy logical-positivist focus, viewing the individual as the empirical base and widely ignoring the influence of social structure, instead focusing on the qualities and actions of individuals (Danermark et al., 1997), has somewhat conflated the status of conscious agency of the coach (viewing the coach as being able to freely and uncritically deliver behaviours, without any constraining factors or influences). Jones (2000) contended that this misrepresents coaching as a sequential, 'clean' and uncomplicated activity. Consequently, the body of work conducted from a positivist lens lacks accounts of how agency is often nested within a myriad of structural constraints which must be negotiated (Jones & Ronglan, 2018). Moreover, because positivism operates on an ontology which is flat (i.e., equating reality with what can be observed and experienced), often takes a Humean approach to causation, and searches for constant conjunctions (Sayer, 2004), it is incapable of extending beyond a search for empirical regularities. The view it takes of the relationship between knowledge and objects means that an inclusion of interpretive understanding is incomprehensible (Sayer, 2004). Instead, in the end, everything must be empirically driven and statistically tested, often through observational study designs, to confirm or falsify hypotheses – hence, the capacity for causal theoretical explanation of empirical events is severely restricted. In this regard, Jones et al. (2016) point to simplistic representations of coaching and refusals to recognise the inherent complexity of social contexts as failing to serve practitioners or the profession itself, leaving a practice-theory gap

in understanding (Hemmestad et al., 2010). The drive of positivism to create (broad) generalisable truths about effective coaching, in order to inform and underpin a wide range of coaches' actions is insensitive to the constraints and idiosyncrasies which coaches must contend and navigate (Kahan, 1999).

Qualitative positivist approaches have attempted to further our understanding of coaching in terms of suppositional models 'for' the process (Fairs, 1987; Lyle, 2002), or 'of' coaches' cognitive capacities (i.e., knowledge and expertise; e.g., Coté et al., 1995). These approaches still somewhat lack grounding in actual coaching practice, or explicit appreciation of the roles in which structure and agency play in determining action (Fleetwood, 2008), however. Such work from a positivist agenda often situates and proposes models of coaching as being encompassing and indicative of a broad range of coaches and situations. While this provides a useful frame, and although interaction with contextual features is put forward as a central element of some models (e.g., Côté et al., 1995), consideration of such idiosyncratic features and nuances of individual coaching contexts are often then ignored in the application of these models (Cushion et al., 2006). Simultaneously, this means that understandings of the in-situ behaviour of coaches and how this may be flexibly adapted, or how this may map onto conceptual models, is scant. Only a very small branch of positivist work has given credence to coaches' (agential) practice and influence being nested within, constrained by, and operationalised through complex sets of structural conditions (e.g., Saury & Durand, 1998), highlighting a need to generate more sophisticated social understandings of coaching. As such, Jones and Wallace (2005) advocated a need for research which generated *knowledge for understanding* and recognised the political and emotional aspects of coaching. Although the applicability and usefulness of positivism within coaching research has been heavily questioned and criticised by many, what should be remembered is that positivism often provides us with a starting point to explore the *how*, *when*, and *why* in greater depth (possibly through alternate paradigms). For example, where positivism is able to highlight that a significant relationship is present between a specific element of coaching practice (e.g., autocratic behaviour) and an athlete outcome (e.g., anxiety), this stimulates further research to understand *how*, *when*, *why*, *for whom*, and *under which circumstances* this might

be the case. Nonetheless, positivist work in isolation remains heavily abstracted from, and limited in its ability to capture the individual nuances and idiosyncrasies of specific coaching contexts.

2.3 Interpretivist-informed sport coaching research

Given coaching has been highlighted as a complicated and contested activity requiring frequent adaptability on the coach's part, researchers recognised a need to comprehend coaching in more holistic and multifaceted ways around the turn of the millennium (Potrac et al., 2000; Potrac & Jones, 1999). Jones (2000) called for coaching to be understood through sociological means in order to recognise that effective pedagogical practice is founded on adaptability, creativity and social responsibility, with coaches frequently being exposed to a multitude of social constraints and pressures which must be negotiated. A plethora of research has since been conducted from ontological and epistemological positions aligned with interpretivism (e.g., Cushion & Jones, 2006; Gearity & Metzger, 2017; Jones, 2009; Jones, Glintmeyer, & McKenzie, 2005; Jones & Wallace, 2005; Nelson et al., 2013; Potrac & Jones, 2009; Potrac, Jones, & Armour, 2002; Potrac et al., 2007; Potrac, Smith, & Nelson, 2017; Purdy & Potrac, 2016).

Interpretivism, in sharp contrast to positivism, implies that social domains cannot be investigated using the same ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions as those used to study more natural (or physical) sciences. Social science is instead seen as being inherently concerned with individual (and collective) meaning making in light of political and cultural phenomena (Markula & Silk, 2011). Where positivism would seek inferences from studied samples to the wider population, often concerning more *breadth* in relation to findings, interpretivism is interested in how agents conceptualise their experiences, behaviour and actions, often attempting to access *depth* and richness in the data obtained (Ryan, 2018; Sparkes, 1992). Interpretivism widely views knowledge as being socially constructed and subjective (i.e., a subjectivist epistemology). Rather than attempting to know about a world which exists independent to us, many within this position are instead interested in sense making developed by individuals within or about this world (i.e., they adopt a relativist ontology) (Scott, 2009). As such, methodology conforming to the assumptions of interpretivism typically aims to understand more about the individual case (Layder,

1998). As an example, building upon the early positivist work of Jowett and Meek (2000), Poczwardowski, Barott, and Henschen (2002) aimed to extend our knowledge of the coach-athlete relationship and how individuals made sense of this using an interpretive epistemology with in-depth interviews, participant observation and field notes. Results of this work implied that the coach-athlete relationship could be viewed as a continual cycle of care between the coach and the athlete, constituting interaction and activity between the two parties, of which meaning making and interpretation played an essential feature. Specifically, interpretation, meaning making and negotiation were put forward as key drivers that underpinned processes of growth on the part of both coaches and athletes. As a consequence, the authors turned to symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1934) as a framework through which coach-athlete relationships could and should be understood; behaviour could be viewed as a function of meaning making established through interpretation and introspection.

Seeking meaning making at an individual (and collective) level, research from the interpretivist paradigm has widely concerned itself with a pursuit to bring complexities of the coach's role to the fore of knowledge. In particular, this has been related to an understanding of *how* coaches attempt to manage and negotiate pathos in their roles as well as how their actions are constrained, shaped by, or themselves shape structural components. Perhaps this strand of work is best conceptualised by Bowes and Jones' (2006) contention that coaches constantly work at the 'edge of chaos'. In other words, notwithstanding the fact that coaches are required to negotiate a myriad of power-driven, challenging and nuanced endeavours, they are rarely in a position where they are completely unable to function in their roles. Coping is instead often achieved through working at the edge of chaos – not in a position of complete or unmanageable chaos (Bowes & Jones, 2006). Specifically, the coach's role has been likened to that of an orchestrator (Jones & Wallace, 2005, 2006). In response to their own dissatisfaction with orthodox portrayals of coaching, Robyn Jones and colleagues (Jones et al., 2013; Jones & Ronglan, 2018; Jones & Wallace, 2005, 2006; Santos, Jones, & Mesquita, 2013) have advocated the conception of *orchestration,* defined as:

> a coordinated activity within set parameters expressed by coaches to instigate, plan, organise, monitor and respond to evolving circumstances in order to bring about improvement in the individual and collective performance of those being coached (Jones & Wallace, 2005, p. 128).

Compared to utopian notions of unfettered freedom and rationalistic heroism, the orchestration metaphor – incorporating flexible, responsive practice that steers, guides and scaffolds athletes' performance – is positioned as more realistically depicting the humble and unobtrusive management of uncertainty that characterises coaching, and which requires a focussed oversight of ensemble tasks, activities and (inter)actions (Jones & Wallace, 2006). As such, this conceptualisation neither conflates the status of structure or agency in explaining action and provides a position through which such an orthodoxy can be resolved.

Just as orchestrators are required to contend with myriad complex components (e.g., musicians playing a variety of instruments) and determine how they best fit together, similarly, coaches must negotiate a wide range of contested variables and evolving conditions in order to meet their desired ends (e.g., typically performance enhancement of the team or individual). Building upon this metaphorical position, Jones et al. (2013) later incorporated writings on the management of complex change to bring orchestration and its theoretical application closer to coaching, explaining how, or through which means coaches orchestrate. Firstly, this introduced the work of Hoyle and Wallace (2008) which proposed that social life (e.g., coaching) is inherently complex, and filled with *irony*, dilemmas, *ambiguity* and unintended consequences. Here, the activity of coaching is marked by a *pathos* (i.e., a distance between goals set and the actual ability to then achieve these goals in practice) which is created by limited control, limited awareness, contradictory beliefs and novelty experienced by coaches (Jones & Wallace, 2005). Secondly, Kelchtermans and Ballet's (2002a) work was used to position coaches' actions as *micro-political*, often necessitating the navigation of complex working conditions, using resources or power to influence their desired ends. Finally, *noticing* (Mason, 2002) – the act of closely observing in order to see or attend to opportunities to act – was put forward as an important aspect of coaches' orchestrative actions. Indeed, in this regard Jones et al. (2013) argued that, in order to cope with the emergent consequences of iterative social inter(action), coaches need to become more aware of 'how athletes frame various situations,

including their motives, their interests, and the way they perceive a coach's conduct' (p. 281). More recently, scholars have sought to provide empirical examples of *if*, *how*, and *what* coaches specifically orchestrate (Jones & Ronglan, 2018; Readdy, Zakrajsek, & Raabe, 2016; Ronglan & Aggerholm, 2014; Santos et al., 2013). For example, Santos et al. (2013) and Readdy et al. (2016) highlighted that coaches may generate (an illusion of) empowerment among stakeholders with whom they work (e.g., assistant coaches), while maintaining a necessity to make decisions themselves, in order to increase 'buy-in' and further their desired ends. Meanwhile, Ronglan and Aggerholm (2014) suggested that coaches orchestrated by using humour to manage the seriousness of elite sport and facilitate fluency between role commitment and role distance. Jones and Ronglan (2018) further reinforced coaching as a complex, relational act and presented the example of a football coach orchestrating. In recognising the complexity associated with trying to control outcomes or performance in football (i.e., due to the limited opportunities for direct intervention during the game and few rules in the game relating to when and how to pass) the example of coaches orchestrating through coaching based upon 'principles' and 'typical game situations' was given.

To date, only a very small body of work has investigated the experiences of athletes in relation to orchestration and pathos (Bjørndal & Ronglan, 2018; Raabe, Readdy, & Zakrajsek, 2017)[2]. For example, drawing upon semi-structured interviews and field observations, Bjørndal & Ronglan's (2018) longitudinal study identified several features of the Scandinavian youth handball talent development system indicative *of* or with implications *for* coach orchestration, including athletes' competing time pressures, conflicting goals and demands, and balancing training/playing load and recovery. Specifically, it was evident that coaches only had partial influence, among complex networks of stakeholders, over the talent development of their athletes. While Bjørndal and Ronglan (2018) highlighted important issues for team sport coaches to accommodate at the level of the talent development system, their study did not extend to offer vivid descriptions of how coaches

[2] Given the critical realist underpinning to the work of Raabe et al., (2017), this study is discussed within section 2.5.

or athletes navigated these issues through their situated, temporal, micro-level orchestrative practices.

Despite its limited application in coaching work to date, orchestration helps to contribute toward a meaningful research agenda also evident across other disciplines (e.g., organisation and management fields), to 'question the widespread tendency in both academic research and popular thinking to exaggerate leaders' contributions and to treat leadership as a causal and explanatory category' (Collinson et al., 2018, p. 1627) – what Meindl et al. (1985) refer to as the 'romance of leadership'. Particularly, in coaching, it helps to remove the image of coaches as powerful agents who can control situations and the actions of others to bring about positive outcomes. Instead, it views followers (i.e., athletes) as being capable of conforming with or resisting the acts of leaders. Thus, athletes are required to orchestrate pathos themselves. As such, further deployment of the orchestration metaphor holds strong potential to investigate the relations and (inter)actions of coaches with other stakeholders and how they are influential (or not).

Sticking with the view of coaching as being dependent upon complex power relations and interactions with a variety of stakeholders, a large proportion of coaching work has deployed the concepts of French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu, to examine the dynamics of social order (e.g., Cushion, 2001; Cushion & Jones, 2006; Hassanin & Light, 2014; Townsend, Huntley, Cushion, & Fitzgerald, 2018). For instance, Cushion (2001), through a Bourdieusian framework, highlighted the problematic and interdependent composition of relationships which underpinned and influenced the activity of coaching in a professional football club. This study contributed significantly towards our understanding of how complex interactions between coaches, the club environment, and players may connect to influence or constrain the activity of coaching and its operationalisation. In drawing upon Pierre Bourdieu's work, Cushion (2001) related to the concepts of habitus, field, capital and practice to explain and understand the complexities of coaching. Habitus – the unconscious mental structures at an individual level through which apprehension of the world around us is made (Bourdieu, 1989) – was used to comprehend the unconscious influences which underpinned, explained and structured the actions, thoughts and feelings of coaches. The concept of field – or the system of social positions

which make up an environment and define the position in which those who occupy it sit (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) – was used to understand how coaches were positioned (in their field) through interaction with habitus and the allocation of capital, or forms of power. Capital – or the extent to which individuals can control their own future, or the future of others depending upon the forms and degree of power afforded to them (Bourdieu, 1986) – was incorporated to make sense of the complexity of relationships and their development over time. Finally, practice – the daily actions of individuals, seen as being produced by interaction of both the agent and structural conditions (Bourdieu, 1977), through a 'feel for the game' (Bourdieu, 1980) – was studied to understand the means through which coaching practice was structured and delivered. For example, the production of skilful players (who were themselves intent on increasing their own capital and securing a professional full-time contract), through complex networks of capital afforded to different individuals and interaction with the structures of the club, was identified as an inherent feature of this specific coaching context through which the activity of coaching was implemented (Cushion, 2001).

In continuing the application of Bourdieu's concepts as a theoretical underpinning to empirical coaching work, Cushion and Jones (2006) conducted in-situ longitudinal ethnographic work within a professional youth soccer context. Utilising the methods of participant observation and interviews, this ethnography highlighted symbolic violence (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) as a constitutional, deep-rooted feature of the coaching context observed. Such violence was manifest through coaches using abusive language, chastisement, and punishment related to physical exercise, often delivering these behaviours in a hegemonic manner related to masculine norms. Such approaches and their alignment with the predominant cultures of football were interpreted as contributing toward the habitus acting as a set of ordering principles to guide individuals' actions in the context, which subsequently influenced the cyclical embodiment of such cultures and values. Very few opportunities for player autonomy were reported and coaches were observed as strong dictators of training regimes. High levels of pressure were also placed on players to perform well as

a result of the power (capital) afforded to coaches, through their continual use of fear tactics and harsh consequences delivered in the event of a mistake being made.

Players who conformed to the cultural norms were treated more favourably by coaches, who played a large role in assigning capital to squad members. Conversely, players who were deemed to be 'rejects' were frequently chastised by coaches, or substituted. As such, they were afforded less capital when compared to more favourably viewed players, meaning their position within the field was markedly inferior (Cushion & Jones, 2006). In sum, the culture created and reinforced by coach behaviour was viewed as generating a powerful doxic system, dependent upon the complicity of stakeholders and a desire to maintain the perceived legitimate norms (generated at a personal level in terms of what was expected in the eyes of the beholder). Compliance of players was also reported to be influenced by their respect for coaches as previous professional players, adding weight to the power relations through culturally ascribed capital. Importantly, this study was among the first to also recognise the agency (i.e., resistance) of athletes. For example, it was suggested that most athletes were compliant with the regime, however, some utilised impression management strategies (Goffman, 1959), to appear to be exerting effort (to coaches), whilst simultaneously seeking to show their peers that they were not the 'teacher's pet' by conserving effort and not being 'too eager'. Although providing a unique look into the dialectical means through which athletes can make use of their agency and subtly resist the practices of coaches, this work did not seek to explain the mechanism through which normative influences (i.e., habitus) and agency may be able to interact *together* to inform behaviour.

While the majority of players were assumed to be complicit (through continued attendance, participation, and ascriptions of power) in seeking to appease the culturally created norms or expectations, their capacity for conscious agential reflexivity (Archer, 2003) may have been unintentionally and perhaps somewhat inevitably downplayed. It is entirely plausible that players also guised, masked, or concealed (Goffman, 1959) their true intentions from the researcher, in fear that the researcher may have passed this information on to the coach. Especially in light of the powerful doxic system already an inherent feature of the field, with harsh consequences for anyone

who stepped out of line. As such, players at an agential level may have had clear motives to resist by removing themselves from the harsh environment, but felt unable to do so through perceptions of structural conditions (e.g., the influence of parents in reinforcing the opportunity to secure a professional contract). Alternatively, athletes may have agentially decided that other rewards (e.g., gaining status from playing as part of an elite football academy) made putting up with the coaching practice worthwhile. Nonetheless, the ethnographic methodology proved to be a particularly effective approach to advance coaching literature by paying much greater attention to the situated and temporal aspects of practice and culture than previous (e.g., positivist) work.

As has been gently alluded to throughout this discussion of Bourdieusian-based work, one critique of the theoretical lens of habitus is that it downregulates the capacity of agents to consciously adapt their behaviour or actions, instead focusing more heavily on sets of structural preconditions and how they shape or constrain behaviour (Elder-Vass, 2007b). Habitus is seen as having an unconscious influence on behaviour. In other words it can be viewed as: 'systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends' (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 53). As such, it has been suggested that although Bourdieu's later work incorporated some degree of reflexivity (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), this potential for conscious deliberation is viewed as being firmly a secondary possibility, which must be preceded by the logic of habitus (Elder-Vass, 2007b). Given much interpretivist-informed work has focused heavily on the coach and the structural influences both shaping and being shaped by their role, using abovementioned logic (e.g., Christensen, 2009; Griffiths & Armour, 2013; Harvey, Cushion, & Massa-Gonzalez, 2010; Light & Evans, 2013; Steinfeldt et al., 2011; Taylor & Garratt, 2010; Taylor & McEwan, 2012; Townsend & Cushion, 2017), there is a role for research to examine how the individual agency of athletes may play a role in determining action *alongside* structural influences (i.e., habitus).

In attempting to redress the scarcity of accounts looking at the activity of coaching from the point of view of the athlete, a small number of interpretivist-informed scholars have set out to

understand athletes' constructions, negotiations and (inter)actions with coaches, particularly through the lenses of power or discipline (e.g., Barker-Ruchti & Tinning, 2010; Claringbould, Knoppers, & Jacobs, 2015; Cushion & Jones, 2006; Purdy, Jones, & Cassidy, 2009; Purdy, Potrac, & Jones, 2008; Purdy & Jones, 2011). For instance, Purdy et al. (2009) used in-depth interviews, participant observation and maintained reflective journals to write realist tales of athletes' constructions and interpretations of coaching practice. Aiming to present the athletes' point of view and highlight the 'typicality' of the phenomena either observed or generated through interviews, the authors drew upon Bourdieu's notions of capital and habitus. The story of Sean (pseudonym) depicted a very different power relationship to that displayed in previous work. Specifically, Sean – a national-level rower – was reported to flex his agential capacity for non-conformity by declining the opportunity to attend training as part of a national programme, instead continuing to train at his home club. Coaches of the programme perceived this to be a threat to the value and credibility of the programme, in what typified a field of contested struggles (Jenkins, 2002), and competitions for power and resources (Wacquant, 1998). As coaches felt threatened or undermined by the actions of Sean (to reject their training offer), although allowing him to continue to participate within the national training programme (on the basis that Sean held a high order of symbolic and physical capital in their eyes), they attempted to alienate him in order to counter the potential for their own social capital, and by extension, power, to be diminished.

Albeit allowing more scope for a portrayal of how athletes themselves 'flex' their agential 'muscles' (i.e., in depicting how an athlete had selected to go against the cultural norms and expectations as set out by coaches), Purdy et al. (2009) firmly grounded their conceptualisation in a manner consistent with Bourdieu's contention that agency must always be preceded by, and bound to habitus as an unconscious form of explanatory underpinning (Schubert, 2002). Conceivably, this provided an explanation as to why the study then moved into an exploration of how coaches operated 'within a degree of bounded agency to protect their hierarchical status (and capital) within the rowing program' (Purdy et al., 2009, p. 331), as opposed to looking into the underpinning factors which may have explained the conscious decisions made by other stakeholders (i.e., athletes). Only minor

discussion of how Sean's decision influenced other athletes' actions within the context was made. Further, an exploration of how and why Sean felt that he could exercise such a consciously reflexive decision, notwithstanding the pre-existing cultural factors (which a Bourdieusian perspective would view as constraining such action), was omitted. The very fact that Sean was able to decide to go against the coaches' attempts to require all athletes to train within the programme, instead of acting 'to more or less reproduce existing structures of domination and privilege' (Schubert, 2002, p. 1093), would imply that a greater level of conscious deliberation, or reflexivity needs to be incorporated alongside the conceptualisation of habitus (Elder-Vass, 2007b), to account for these occurrences. Such difficulty in examining tensions between structure and agency were in fact explicitly alluded to by the authors themselves. In referring to the work of Jenkins (2002), Purdy et al. (2009) implied that 'the distinction between conscious thought and the unconscious mind is not a clear one' (p. 335).

Both earlier and later work of Purdy and colleagues explored the utility of other theoretical positions relating to structure and agency in explaining the power dynamics and relationships that exist between coaches and athletes (Purdy et al., 2008; Purdy & Jones, 2011). Suggesting that structure and agency should be viewed as more of a duality, and that while social structure can enable or constrain action, individual agential action is also capable of forming, reproducing and changing social structure, these works drew heavily upon Giddens' (1984) structuration theory. Purdy and Jones (2011) used ethnographic methods to unearth the power relationships both established and developed within an elite rowing context. What quickly became apparent in the study was that athletes interpreted their coaches' use of instruction to be inadequate and lack clear direction or focus. This was in clear misalignment with their expectations of good coaching – for unambiguous, justified and thus relevant direction. As a consequence, rowers questioned their coaches' credibility and knowledge, meaning that they experienced ontological insecurity (Giddens, 1984, 1998). For example, when coaches delivered specific instructional messages with one intention, athletes sometimes interpreted this instruction differently and were resultantly scolded for this, leading to friction between coaches and athletes. Such loss of faith in the coaches' credibility and misinterpretation led to athletes making fun of coaches and often making scornful or derogatory

comments about them. In light of the power relationships present, such behaviour was constrained or frequently enacted covertly, however, as athletes recognised coaches as gatekeepers to successful athletic careers. Their behaviour in this respect was somewhat shaped through experiencing the consequences of previous public challenges to coaches (e.g., athletes being removed from the programme).

In earlier research, Purdy et al. (2008), also integrated the work of Nyberg (1981) to Giddens' dialectic accounts of power. Utilising an autoethnographic approach, the lead author drew from her experiences of a dysfunctional relationship with her coach and specifically how power was contested, shared and continually shifted within this relationship. Using Nyberg's (1981) work as a heuristic device, Purdy and colleagues explored the notion of consent being a necessary precondition for power to be wielded over an individual before it could be effective. Resulting from the coach's early positive interactions with the squad, which conformed to perceived norms (as expected by the athletes) in this context, the lead author originally felt ontologically secure (Giddens, 1984, 1998), and as such consented power to the coach for her to make suggestions and then attempt to work toward these suggestions. Through a change in coach behaviour – namely the use of condescending comments and a perceived lack of compassion or care for athletes alongside the delivery of conflicting or ambiguous messages – athletes' affordances of power to the coach appeared to change. Consequently, in an attempt to restore ontological security, rowers began to somewhat resist and rebel against the structural prompts as put forward by their coach through conscious agential reflexivity (i.e., not following instructions). In challenging the coach's behaviour publicly one of the athletes was expelled from selection in the race team (without being directly informed themselves). When other athletes were made aware that this was the case, levels of power afforded to the coach were lowered further and trust was reported to have broken down to the point where athletes themselves also decided to leave the programme. Further, this lack of ontological security on both sides meant that the coach also moved onto another squad (Purdy et al., 2008).

This (small) body of research, more closely considering the role of the athlete, has provided an important examination of power and the (dialectical) means through which athletes may conform

or resist the practices of coach influence. Although the abovementioned work (i.e., Barker-Ruchti & Tinning, 2010; Claringbould et al., 2015; Cushion & Jones, 2006; Purdy et al., 2009; Purdy et al., 2008; Purdy & Jones, 2011) addresses a gap in that it has allowed athletes to air their interpretations of coaching practice and how they have attempted to manage the circumstances in which they were placed, this has thus far been limited to analyses through the sharing, reproduction and transformation of power (in relationships). What remains sparsely explored in this domain of research is how coaching practice may operationalise an influence on athlete performance (Lyle & Cushion, 2017), intentions for performance or wider outcomes (through athlete interpretation and subsequent management). Further, accounts are yet to recognise the *mechanism(s)* through which athletes' actions are able to be explained by social structure *and* conscious reflexivity. For example, coaching literature is yet to theorise the specific entities at a level of social structure which are capable of causally influencing the actions of agents (alongside their capacity to consciously reflect), or how this process takes place. We are therefore left with an image of coaches who are capable of shaping social structure (and thus athletes' actions) without understanding what aspect of social structure they shape or how this can then influence the actions of others. This is not necessarily a criticism of the work introduced above as it is not something the work ever set out to achieve. Indeed, the depth provided by these sociological lenses has considerably progressed our understanding of the social complexities of coaching. It does, however, spark the questions: a) how might the co-determination of action be explained through social structure *and* conscious reflexivity (e.g., theorising how athletes are able to draw upon their interpretation of contextual conditions in order to consciously make decisions which underpin action)?; and b) how do such interpretations of coaching practice by athletes play a role in influencing their performance, or at least intentions for performance?

Focusing on other sociological theory, coaching research has also incorporated the work of Erving Goffman (e.g., Goffman, 1959, 1969) and alternate power-related theories to broaden understanding. Potrac et al. (2002), using an interpretive approach, explored the pedagogical behaviour of an expert-level English soccer coach and the rationale behind this behaviour. Through a mixed-method design incorporating systematic observation of the coach's practice using the

ASUIO (Lacy & Darst, 1984), and semi-structured interpretive interviews, Potrac and colleagues had the intention of obtaining a more holistic understanding of coach behaviour. In particular, the authors were interested in how pedagogical strategies employed by the coach were influenced by tensions between structure and agency. As such, an analytical framework of interactionism was utilised to make sense of the data (Callero, 1994). Rather than viewing structure as a wholly constraining or deterministic component which controls the behaviours and actions of agents, interactionism views agents as having greater capacity to think and (inter)act with the structural conditions presented to them. Further, in order to make sense of the social, contextual, value-laden and experiential components which underpinned behaviours used by the coach, this work incorporated concepts of social power (Hardy, 1995), and Goffman's (1959) presentation of the self in everyday life (i.e., how individuals often put on 'fronts' in attempt to satisfy the needs of contested environments) into the theoretical framework.

Potrac et al. (2002) reported that the coach's use of instruction and demonstration in this study was guided by an intention to demonstrate contextual expertise and knowledge to his players in order to maintain and enhance his power. As such, this action was viewed as a 'front' (Goffman, 1959), which was put on by the coach to increase informational power (Raven, 1983), and build upon the levels of legitimate power already afforded to him by others through his ascribed position as a coach. Indeed, these actions and behaviours were stated to make the coach more likely to be able to control the development of his players, given his job security was believed to be correlated with playing success. This work then, revealed meaningful data on coaches' intentions for influence (i.e., *how* and *why* they think, feel and act in particular ways). Importantly, an understanding of how coaches' intentions for influence have then actually influenced (or not) the intended target(s) of the behaviour and why, would help to build upon and extend this line of inquiry.

In using a similar methodology and theoretical lens (i.e., impression management and dramaturgy) to Potrac et al. (2002), Partington and Cushion (2012) explored the social, contextual and situational factors which influenced coach behaviour within a previously under-researched area:

competition (i.e., matches). Analysing coach behaviour using the Coach Analysis and Intervention System (CAIS; Cushion, Harvey, Muir, & Nelson, 2012) and supplementing this data with two sets of interpretive interviews, the authors reported the largely performative nature of coach behaviour, which, in alignment with the work of Potrac et al. (2002), was found to be heavily shaped by social constraints and pressures. Within the game environment, coaches were found to put on a 'performance' in order to give impressions that would positively influence future interactions with stakeholders. Coaches felt somewhat pressured to show others that they were 'engaged' in matches by overlaying information to players, even where this might not have been necessary (for the player). In other words, their actions were shaped by what the coaches had come to understand to be an 'appropriate' way of acting when observing other coaches. In the backdrop of fears around job security, this constant need to be seen being active became even more prevalent. The youth football coaches studied also felt acutely aware of their actions when they were being observed by senior management in the organisation, feeling the need to conform to what these individuals would deem to be acceptable. Consequently, Partington and Cushion (2012) suggested that these perpetual power dynamics reinforced traditional approaches to coaching, leaving them 'undisturbed and, therefore, uncritically reproduced' (p. 102). It was also contended that rather than behaviour being implemented in light of sound pedagogically informed bases in this study, action was instead influenced by concerns of coaches relating to pressures of the social context. This perhaps conflates the influence of structural conditions on coaches, and downplays the role of agential reflexivity (Archer, 2003). It is possible that coaches (agents) within this study may have desired to implement sound pedagogical principles aligned to the needs of learners, but felt constrained in their capacity to do so by the very nature of their (socially interpreted) conditions. Alternatively, it is plausible that coaches may have mistakenly felt that the strategies employed were indeed consistent with effective pedagogy, in light of the fact that the behaviours adopted helped them to efficiently meet their intended power-laden goals (Potrac et al., 2002), consistent with their values and beliefs (Chesterfield, Potrac, & Jones, 2010). This study reinforces the importance of incorporating an understanding of both structural conditions *and* conscious agential reflexivity to understand the intentions and actions of coaches.

Jones, Armour, and Potrac (2004) also made use of reflexive interviews with eight top-level coaches from football, rugby, swimming, netball and athletics to understand more about their lived experiences, stories and biographies, before converting these accounts into critical narratives. Again using Goffmanian and power-related concepts (i.e., French and Raven's typology of power; French & Raven, 1959), this work depicted how these expert coaches were inherently required to contend with situational, experiential and contextual features which impinged upon their practices. In drawing upon the work of Lombardo (1987) and Troyer, Mueller, and Osinsky (2000), Jones et al. (2004) critically claimed that it is not just the coach who generates individual expectations of how they should act and behave, but, also, in a relational manner, it is athletes who 'press behavioural expectations on the coach' and 'exert great pressure on the coach to direct their activities' (p. 122). Consequently, in the interviews, coaches were identified as employing specific 'fronts' or 'faces' in order to attempt to appease the needs of their athletes and increase the levels of power afforded by them. Examples of such power-laden attempts included coaches recognising the need to be flexible or adaptable, sometimes offering humour to athletes to develop rapport and generate an illusion that they were in control in difficult circumstances, while simultaneously attempting to maintain a professional and 'distanced' relationship with players, by making use of more authoritative coaching as a tool to direct activities (Jones et al., 2004). Reflecting back on the earlier introduced work of Potrac et al. (2002) and Partington and Cushion (2012), which largely focused on the intentions of coaches from a coach's point of view, this study of Jones et al. (2004) reinforces the need to understand (inter)actions *between* coaches, athletes and others to more fully examine (determinants of) intentions for action, and actual influence generated (or not). In-depth, semi-structured interviews have proven to be a fruitful means to investigate the detailed intentions for influence of coaches in the abovementioned work. Indeed, this method provides a potential avenue to also explore the perceptions of stakeholders (e.g., athletes) in greater depth, to more extensively understand whether coach (inter)action has indeed been influential (or not) and why.

In light of such complex battles between structure and agency depicted in the abovementioned work as an esoteric feature of the domain, scholars called for more work to explicitly

connect research to the micro-political (Potrac & Jones, 2009), and emotional (Potrac, Jones, Purdy, Nelson, & Marshall, 2013; Potrac, Smith, et al., 2017) workings of coaching. More closely, this was advocated on the basis that it would better position practitioners and coach educators to comprehend coaches' struggles and successes in circumnavigating their complex sets of structural constraints. After such calls, numerous articles (e.g., Douglas & Carless, 2017; Magill, Nelson, Jones, & Potrac, 2017; Martinelli, Day, & Lowry, 2017; McNeill, Durand-Bush, & Lemyre, 2017; Potrac, Jones, Gilbourne, & Nelson, 2012; Potrac, Mallett, et al., 2017; Potrac, Nelson, & O'Gorman, 2016; Thompson, Potrac, & Jones, 2015) sought to 'contribute to an evolving problematic epistemology of sports coaching; one that seeks to extend beyond continuing rationalistic and 'heroic' accounts of practice' (Potrac et al., 2012, p. 79).

For instance, in reciting his experiences of the micro-political and emotional workings of life as a football coach within an elite youth football context, Potrac et al. (2012) portrayed the often 'cut-throat' and 'fend for yourself' environment which had to be negotiated. The narrative account pursued illuminations of how coaches were in fact in direct competition with one another to impress the 'Gaffer' [manager]. Coaches were reported to be (often implicitly) satisfied when their colleagues made errors in front of their athletes or the coaching hierarchy, and in such instances seized opportunities to put themselves higher up the 'pecking order' than their co-coaches. In particular, this autoethnographic account was grounded in Bauman's work on liquid modernity (Bauman, 1996, 2000; Bauman, 2003, 2007), which presents a world centred on competition, with little consideration for others, or the environment, and the degradation of collaboration or teamwork. Further, the micro-political framework of Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002b) from a teaching environment, was used to make sense of the practitioners' desires to seek out opportunities to impress significant others within the organisation, in order to further their own desired ends. This micro-political perspective provides an important contribution to the coaching literature through illustrating the *means through which* practitioners use (formal and informal) power to influence and achieve specific goals.

Also adopting a micro-political perspective (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002b), this time alongside Goffman's work on impression management (Goffman, 1959) and stigma (Goffman,

1963), as well as Garfinkel's theory of status degradation (Garfinkel, 1956), Thompson et al. (2015) explored the micro-political workings of a newly appointed fitness coach within a professional football context. Using in-depth, semi-structured (narrative-biographical) interviews, this study identified that Adam (pseudonym) found his early interactions within this setting to be highly problematic. In communication with colleagues (i.e., the goalkeeping coach and physiotherapist), he was challenged in terms of his knowledge, publicly humiliated, and found it difficult to integrate within the already established (for a number of years) coaching team. Resultantly, he experienced shame and degradation in his own eyes, and in the eyes of those who had attempted to degrade him (Garfinkel, 1956), which led to feelings that he had become a discounted and stigmatised individual in the context (Goffman, 1963). Although positive interactions appeared to surface with some colleagues, these were marred by the realisation that he was only selected for the post in the first place due to financial reasons and given that the club could not afford to employ a more senior candidate. In an attempt to redress his 'standing' within this context, Adam began to engage in further micro-political activity (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002b), which often contrasted with his ideological values or beliefs. For example, he reported putting on a public display, or 'front' (Goffman, 1959), of not liking a newly appointed assistant sport science consultant (even though this was not the case in his eyes), to mirror the expressions of colleagues in an attempt to gain acceptance into the 'in-group'. However, these futile attempts were succeeded by further humiliation in front of players and his exclusion from important team meetings, which left him in what he described as an untenable position. Again, acting micro-politically, he decided not to air his feelings with his manager at this point as he felt that doing so would be unlikely to address the issues presented. In fact, it was perceived to be likely to only make things worse. Adam was subsequently released from his role.

This story, in contrast to more functional representations of coaching (e.g., Abraham & Collins, 2011), depicts the often power-ridden and contested nature of coaching whereby multiple stakeholders compete to reinforce or advance their own standing within an organisation (Jones & Wallace, 2005; Potrac et al., 2012; Thompson et al., 2015). Other studies in this area have also investigated how micro-politics play a feature within different contexts or facets of coaching,

including: grassroots environments (e.g., Potrac et al., 2016), the use of video-based feedback by coaches (e.g., Booroff, Nelson, & Potrac, 2016), and the integration of performance analysis within the activity of coaching (e.g., Huggan, Nelson, & Potrac, 2015). This body of work presents a depiction of coaching in which attempts to influence are not achieved through standing apart from complexity, employing specific behaviours which have a dominating influence on others. Instead, attempts to influence are often achieved in and thorough subtle, relational acts where coaches make use of legitimate power and develop buy-in from a range of contextual stakehokders over time.

Interpretivist-informed coaching work, then, has significantly advanced our knowledge of the influence of social structure, and the ambiguous, emotional and political workings of coaches to negotiate such structure (through sociological lenses). Despite implicitly acknowledging the agency of athletes as a result of highlighting the *need* for coaches to influence and persuade, many studies downplay or ignore the capacity for athletes to consciously think and act which can play an important role in determining whether acts of coaches are indeed influential (or not). Save for a small number of papers (e.g., Cushion & Jones, 2006; Purdy, Jones, & Cassidy, 2009; Purdy, Potrac, & Jones, 2008; Purdy & Jones, 2011), this has resulted in a dearth of accounts and representations from the athletes' point of view, whereby athletes (agents) are portrayed as being able to influence their own (and others') thoughts, decisions and actions. Without greater consideration of complex (inter)actions between coaches and athletes, and how this plays a role in shaping the (inter)actions of others, we are at risk of blunting the critical edge of (critical) complexity theories, rendering them as simply theories of 'how leaders, standing apart from complex processes, can attempt to exercise influence' (Tourish, 2019, p. 233). Where the agency of the athlete has been recognised in research, this work has tended to position conformity *or* resistance to coaches' practice(s) as crisply distinct categories. Only a small body of work has begun to consider the dialectical means through which agents simultaneously conform with *and* resist coach requests (Collinson, 2019). More work is required in this area, to consider *how*, *when* and *why* athletes simultaneously conform with *and* resist the practices of multiple leaders.

Although the interpretivist paradigm has undoubtedly advanced research through permitting an understanding of why coaches behave and act in certain ways, how athletes receive, interpret and are influenced by coaching practice (e.g., the impact on performance) remains an area warranting serious consideration within the literature. Specifically, there is a lacuna surrounding explanations of *which* entities at a level of social structure might be responsible (alongside agency) for shaping athletes' actions and how. Addressing such an ontological gap would help to significantly develop our understanding of coach (non)influence. O'Mahoney and Vincent (2014) argue that the capability of interpretivism, alone, to address these types of questions may be limited due to its inability to extend beyond the level of the empirical (i.e., the inability to explore beyond what we can observe or experience). Such a position is stated as lacking ontological depth, and, as such, is limited in its ability to identify causal mechanisms (Bhaskar, 1975). In other words, because ontology and epistemology are seen as analogous, O'Mahoney and Vincent (2014) suggest that research from this paradigm cannot propose causal (fallible) theoretical explanation beyond accounts of narratives or observation. Subsequently, from this viewpoint an understanding of how coaching practice exerts an influence on athletes cannot be researched beyond the level of coach, athlete or researcher interpretation; we are incapable of theorising broader (causal) structural and agential determinants of action. For example, a fuller explanation of the *mechanism* through which structure and agency interact with one another to explain coaches' and athletes' decisions would be difficult to form in this view, as these components would not be able to be detected through human accounts of lived experience alone.

In light of this interpretivist critique, some scholars have recognised the boundaries of interpretivism being limited in its capability to only *understand* (i.e., through multiple realities; Smith & Elger, 2014). Nonetheless, this capability to understand through social construction is a powerful strength of the paradigm and should not be ignored when attempting to advance the sophistication of coaching research. Indeed, because many interpretivists would not deny that some entities are capable of existing independently to human agents (or that entities are capable of exerting a real influence), it has been argued that where *moderate* social constructionism is combined with realist

ontology, it is in fact possible to generate explanatory theory from findings in constructionist-informed research designs (Elder-Vass, 2012a)[3]. This, in direct contrast to the criticisms directed towards interpretivism above, implies that certain forms of interpretivism can indeed theorise (fallible) mechanisms to *explain* rather than simply *understand* phenomena. It has in fact been claimed that good interpretivist research does itself seek to theorise the causal mechanisms underpinning events, outcomes or actions (Klein, 2004; Smith, 2006). Here, some authors have gone as far as to imply that interpretivist accounts of this nature are in fact realist although the authors do not explicitly claim them to be so (Fitzpatrick, 2005; Williams, 2003). Some other paradigms (e.g., poststructuralism) which share the view that social construction is important are analogous with interpretivism in the sense that they view 'reality' or 'truth' as being multiple and subjective (Fawcett, 2012); they are not, however, wholly analogous. Before going on to explore realist applications in more depth, the following section explores poststructuralist-informed sport coaching work.

2.4 Poststructuralist-informed sport coaching research

The field of sport coaching has seen a growing interest in poststructuralism in contemporary literature (Avner, Jones, & Denison, 2014). Such work has principally drawn upon the thesis of Michel Foucault with a particular emphasis on *power* relations, and how knowledge, truth and reality is produced through *discourse*, as opposed to being 'found' (e.g., Denison, 2007, 2010; Denison & Avner, 2011; Denison & Mills, 2014; Denison, Mills, & Konoval, 2017; Garratt, Piper, & Taylor, 2013; Gearity & Mills, 2012; Gerdin, Pringle, & Crocket, 2018; Jones & Toner, 2016; Lang, 2010; Mills & Denison, 2013; Piper, Garratt, & Taylor, 2013; Piper, Taylor, & Garratt, 2012; Shogan, 1999). Poststructuralist researchers deny that it is possible to obtain knowledge, reality or truth objectively as positivists would assert; instead, knowledge is viewed as being contextual, while reality and truth are conceived of as multiple and subjective (Avner et al., 2014). Although viewing truth and reality in this way, alike realist approaches (e.g., critical realism)

[3] This issue of combining realist ontology with (moderate) social constructionism is discussed at greater length in section 4.3 of this thesis.

poststructuralists do not deny the existence of a material reality (Avner et al., 2014). Central to poststructuralism, however, is the notion that reality and truth are produced through discourse, and discourse itself is seen as being formed through dynamic power relations which frame our understanding (Avner et al., 2014).

An important facet of poststructuralism is that power is not possessed, held or imposed upon a dominated powerless class; instead, it is both relational and inextricable from knowledge, reality and truth (Foucault, 1977). Poststructuralist work has commonly sought to understand the dominant discourses of coaching (e.g., physiological and biomechanical understandings) and how the uncritical adoption or promotion of these discourses within fluid power relations may lead to problematic outcomes for stakeholders (Denison & Avner, 2011; Markula & Silk, 2011). Importantly, poststructuralist coaching scholars also recognise that these stakeholders of coaching can themselves influence change in light of power relations present within sporting contexts. Positive changes in this regard are only possible if coaches have a critical awareness of the problematic (and often unintended) consequences of dominant discourses according to a poststructuralist view (Denison & Avner, 2011).

The meta-theoretical assumptions of poststructuralism shape how researchers within this paradigm set out to investigate the world of sport coaching. Because discourse is viewed as being shaped by ongoing power relations, historicity and temporality are important dimensions to consider in order to trace the development, production and reproduction of these discourses. Of significant importance is recognising that researchers themselves are not immune to the power relations and discourse which they seek to understand; the poststructuralist researcher in fact participates in the production of knowledge, realities or truths themselves (Markula & Silk, 2011). In doing so, researchers operating within this frame have typically attempted to address one of three broad research aims: a) to understand or map discourses which shape understanding, b) to critique the (problematic) effects emanating from these discourses, or c) to develop theory driven interventions which seek to work towards more ethical practices. Specifically, the work of Denison and colleagues (e.g., Denison, 2007, 2010; Denison & Avner, 2011; Denison & Mills, 2014;

Denison et al., 2017), Piper and colleagues (e.g., Garratt et al., 2013; Piper et al., 2013; Piper et al., 2012), and scholars who have more recently brought their poststructuralist assumptions to coaching research (e.g., Gerdin et al., 2018; Jones & Toner, 2016), provide pertinent examples of work in this area.

Among early poststructuralist coaching work, Denison (2007) employed a Foucauldian reading of poor performance by one of the athletes whom he coached, and, in doing so, critically challenged his engagement with discourse using an auto-ethnographic approach. After the long-distance runner he coached had majorly underperformed within what was stated to be the most important race of the season, the first author reported his initial search to explain this performance in light of existing and dominant discourses within coaching at the time. Using the work of Foucault (1977), and building upon Shogan's (1999) application of this theory to explore concepts of discipline, discourse, power, and control in sport coaching, this paper sought to both explain, revisit and reframe an initial *psychological* reading of poor performance. In the days after the poor performance had taken place, the lead author began to explore (his interaction with) psychological discourse to explain the circumstances (e.g., had the athlete psyched out, or had the pressure of the event got to him?). These explanations did not sit comfortably with the coach, and, as such, he felt that he was left without a suitable theoretical frame through which the performance could be heuristically explained. Through applying Foucault's concepts of discipline and control, Denison (2007) came to recognise that much of his coaching practice resembled coach-led 'structure' whereby he himself decided what was legitimate for his athlete to *do* in training.

In critically exploring his previous assumptions that discipline and control were majorly positive features of coaching (and indeed aspects which were recommended within discourses of coach education programmes), the author identified how the adoption of these practices may have had unintended consequences for the athlete he was coaching. While not by any means suggesting that discipline and structure were entirely unfruitful elements of coaching, this paper theorised that the practice of the coach, in closely planning and maintaining 'surveillance' of the training programme, had resulted in the athlete finding himself in a quandary between docility and

resistance. In other words, the athlete had tried to negotiate conflicting emotions relating to the desire to uphold his sporting goals whilst at the same time becoming tired of taking part within a structured, disciplined programme of training. Resultantly, he experienced a (negative) shift in how running was both felt and experienced (Denison, 2007). In line with Foucault's (1977) concept of power, the actions of the coach were not exercised over the athlete; instead the athlete was viewed as being relatively free to decide his response, and, as such, it was a relational power relationship which had formed the unintended influences of the practice. Consequently, Denison (2010) later argued that coaches should recognise knowledge, learning and identity as relational and social acts. Indeed, it was posited that doing so would support coaches in becoming more critically aware of the sources (social conditions and discourses) which informed their coaching, in turn helping to challenge uncritical representations of coaching and promote more ethical practices. This work provided an important line of inquiry into the coaching literature. Specifically, it highlighted the need to remain cognisant of power relations and the role of discourse when attempting to understand the influence of coaching practice.

Denison and Avner (2011) reinforced the notion that (positive) coaching has largely been conceived through a modernist lens with privileged scientific disciplinary knowledge. In order to advance positive and ethical coaching practice it was advocated that coaches should critically challenge their knowledge bases and anticipate both the intended and unintended effects of their practices (Denison & Avner, 2011). In pursuit of supporting such aims, Denison and colleagues extended their work in mapping, problematising, and promoting interventions for more ethical contemporary approaches to coaching (e.g., Denison & Mills, 2014; Denison et al., 2017; Mills & Denison, 2013). Building upon their earlier research, which used interviews and observations with 15 coaches, and suggested that when the training activities of long-distance runners were broken down into segmented components, the body of the athlete could easily become docile (Mills & Denison, 2013), the same authors later questioned the effectiveness of training plans when the plan was totally controlled by the coach (Denison & Mills, 2014). Given the activity of long-distance running necessitates constant adaptation whereby athletes are forced to make quick decisions in-

the-moment, if coaching is structured in a such a manner where athletes are *told* what to do all of the time, strictly disciplined, and have everything planned for them, somewhat of a paradox exists according to Denison and Mills (2014). Consequently, the authors asserted:

> Naturally, we recognize that coaches have a great deal of knowledge about training and racing that can be useful and productive, it can have great utility. However, we believe the relationship between conformity and control, the making of a docile body, and awareness and independence, the making of a thinking athlete, that currently defines coaches' practices is totally out of balance: an imbalance formed through a range of complex relations of power and maintained by the continued use and reliance on a number of disciplinary techniques and instruments (Denison & Mills, 2014, p. 3).

In attempting to redress this imbalance, some potential strategies were put forward for coaches, which were not as heavily focused on structure, systematicity, or the repeated marking and control of movement, space and time. For example, one of the suggested interventions introduced was for coaches to reduce the monotony of the spaces in which their runners trained. This could be achieved by changing the location of training or designing sessions over a range of distances. Alternatively, coaches could critically consider the balance of power relations by taking a step back from training and allowing athletes to (design and) administer the session (Denison & Mills, 2014). Of upmost importance was the need to change athletes' perceptions of control and the view that athletes are the 'target' of coaching interventions as opposed to co-facilitators of practice. According to the authors, this could only be achieved through problematising the temporal and relational forces of power, while recognising that this itself may be likely to bring multiple (unintended) effects, and that new practice is never immune to resistance (Denison & Mills, 2014). Without problematising the discursive formation of coaches' activities in this regard, initiatives to progress the positivity, authenticity and ethical nature of coaching practice are likely to remain coaching rhetoric within a framework which maintains the 'norm' of maximal coach control according to Denison et al. (2017). Providing significant implications, then, this work reminds researchers of the need to remain acutely aware of both the potential intended *and* unintended influences of coaching practice.

Recently, poststructuralist research has also pursued a critical exploration of the use of technology in coaching (i.e., GPS, heart rate monitoring, video recording for performance analysis) and how this can serve as an instrument of discipline (Jones & Toner, 2016), using Foucault's writings on the technology of self (Gerdin et al., 2018). In providing a critical commentary, Jones and Toner (2016) highlighted that the capacity to capture data in sport has exponentially grown through significant technological advancements. While acknowledging the benefits of such technology (e.g., enhancing skill proficiency or improved injury rehabilitation), the authors also stated that its implementation in sport could have adverse and unintended effects. It was acknowledged that a powerful discourse existed in the sport coaching domain reinforcing the use of surveillance technologies as a mechanism to enhance athlete performance. Specifically, Jones and Toner (2016) proposed that surveillance technologies often served to act as instruments of discipline for athletes as a result of the overly positive discourse which surrounded them and their uncritical implementation by coaches. The use of advanced technology was thus posited as being capable of producing what Foucault termed a *docile body* (i.e., a body that serves to be used, transformed and improved), and, in doing so, was likely to foster negative relationships between exercise and the body or promote identity foreclosure for athletes.

Notably, then, surveillance was recognised as having the dangerous power to 'sterilise' meaningful relationships developed between coaches and athletes (Jones & Toner, 2016). To guard against these unintended influences, Jones and Toner (2016) recommended that coaches were educated so as to avoid unnecessary forms of discipline imposed through the use of surveillance. Further, it was suggested that coaches should use technology to facilitate kinaesthetic bodily awareness in athletes, as opposed to simply using the tool as a mechanism to closely monitor and punish athletes according to stringent norms (Jones & Toner, 2016). Despite little engagement with the perspective of the athlete (e.g., through interviews), this body of research nonetheless reaffirms the need for work to more intricately appreciate congruence or convergence between the *intended* and *actual* influence of coaching practices. Such evidence would enable coaches to more critically plan for, understand, and reflect upon the influence(s) of their practice. Further, research of this

nature could provide athletes with a broader awareness of the means through which they are (unconsciously) influenced by the actions of others (i.e., coaches) over time, and an ability to more effectively recognise unethical coaching practice.

In sum, then, virtues of the poststructuralist paradigm have provided the capacity to powerfully critique dominant discourses which are interwoven into the social milieu of coaching. In particular, challenging discourse through more closely understanding dynamic power relations and unintended consequences has provided an avenue upon which more effective and ethical coaching can be sought (Denison & Avner, 2011). As such, poststructuralism has valuably contributed to the literature of sport coaching. Nonetheless, as with any philosophical approach, it does not come without limitations. Some authors have criticised poststructuralism on the basis that it has an inherent focus on the negative (Dawkins, 1998; Rosenau, 1991). For instance, this may be illustrated by the large proportion of poststructuralist work in coaching which has focused on how discourse around discipline, punishment, safeguarding policy and technology, among other components, can be negative (e.g., Denison, 2007; Garratt et al., 2013; Gearity & Mills, 2012; Gerdin et al., 2018; Jones & Toner, 2016; Piper et al., 2013). Poststructuralists, themselves, would reject this criticism and instead argue that their work simply seeks to understand or map existing discourse to inform critique. While this is conducted through a critical lens, it does not necessarily have to be pessimistic. Furthermore, the paradigm has been implicated as being too deterministic; because power is viewed as being entangled within discourse, it has been suggested that this does not leave scope for individuals to make their own conscious decisions (Markula & Silk, 2011). In other words, Foucault seems to view humans as having an *illusion* of being agentic subjects, while in fact existing as compliant political subjects (Elder-Vass, 2012b). Here, on the contrary, poststructuralists have argued that agency is accounted for in the production and reproduction of discourse. For example, in a coaching context, because power is viewed as relational, the actions of the athlete can also influence the coach (Denison, 2007).

Despite recognising the existence of a material reality (Avner et al., 2014), the inclusion of poststructuralism as a set of guiding meta-theoretical concepts within coaching research has rarely

considered the real referents of *how* and *why* discourse can shape action. For instance, Foucault's argument fails to account for the causal mechanism through which discourse influences the action of agents. Because the body is viewed as a 'site for the insidious discourses' and '[d]isciplinary power works on the body' (Caldwell, 2007, p. 9), it would appear that Foucault views power or discourse itself as the 'things' which influence us to act in certain ways, not our reading of these entities (e.g., in the actions of others). Thus, it seems that, according to Foucault, the causal power of discursive formations exists in nothing other than discourse within a previous 'archive' (Elder-Vass, 2012a). This reading of Foucault is evident in his recourse to modern power being like a tree, with its branches extending into society, controlling behaviour while giving the illusion of freedom (Foucault, 1978), or to power and discourse producing unwritten rules and structures that structure the way people perceive reality (Markula & Pringle, 2006; Mills, Caulfield, Fox, Baker, & Woolverton, 2018). Although providing valuable insights in suggesting that it is possible for agents to challenge or resist unwritten rules (Mills et al., 2018), and that there can be no morally right or wrong truths (existing independently to us), Foucault's notion requires rebuilding to fully explain *how* discourse and power shape our action. As will be presented later in this thesis, Elder-Vass (2012a) provides what I consider to be an excellent account which rebuilds Foucault's argument to explain how discourse and power can shape or structure, but not fully determine action, through his critical realist (emergentist) theory of *norm circles*.

2.5 Critical realist-informed sport coaching research

More recently, sport coaching has seen an emergent interest in the promotion and implementation of meta-theory belonging to critical realism (Keegan, Spray, Harwood, & Lavallee, 2010; North, 2013a, 2013b, 2017; Plateau, Arcelus, McDermott, & Meyer, 2015; Readdy et al., 2016). Specifically, North (2013b) argued that although positivism and interpretivism provide us with 'a rich seam of evidence to explore that can contribute to layered causal explanation', positivism 'tends to offer a successionist view of causation based on regularities and a limited role for theory', whereas 'interpretivism is generally not concerned with causal explanation rather interpretive understanding or *verstehen*' (p. 295). This relates to what critical realists would term a

'flat ontology', or the 'epistemic fallacy'. In other words, positivism and interpretivism alone are viewed by some as being incapable of extending beyond knowledge according to our observations or experiences of events; what *there is* to know is collapsed into what *can be* known (Bhaskar, 1975). Epistemic relativism of this regard often collapses into judgmental relativism: the view that it is impossible to judge between competing claims (e.g., because, as in idealism, the social world is conceptualised as being constructed entirely via discourse, language, signs or texts, no account of it can be incorrect; Fleetwood, 2014). In contrast, critical realism would suggest that the world is real (realist ontology) and that entities *can* exist independently to us or our ability to identify them (Fleetwood, 2004). As such, critical realism provides a powerful position upon which we are able to embrace aspects of interpretivism or postmodernism (i.e., poststructuralism), without being 'blown off course by idealism' (Fleetwood, 2014, p. 186). Importantly, the view that I take of (sophisticated, well developed) interpretivist work and critical realist work is more closely aligned than that of some critical realists. As discussed at greater length in section 4.3 of this thesis, rather than engaging in wholesale, simplistic critique and counter posing of interpretivism and critical realism, I (alike others) believe that despite subtle differences, interpretivism and critical realism have much in common and can work together to address significant research problems (Hay, 2011).

Ontology, according to a critical realist perspective, is viewed as being layered, stratified, or as having depth; real entities and powers interact to produce events at the level of the actual, and we experience (the effects of) these events at the level of the empirical (North, 2013a). Real entities can exist as 'things' in many forms. For example, entities can be materially real which (may) exist independently to an agent who identifies them (e.g., oceans), ideally real (e.g., discourse, language, texts, beliefs, meanings), artefactually real (e.g., computers or technologies), or socially real (e.g., organisations or social structures)[4]. Anything which is real has 'causal efficacy or makes a difference' (Fleetwood, 2014, p. 204). The fundamental purpose of critical realism, then, is to aim

[4] Importantly, Elder-Vass (2007a) argues, and I agree with the position that, social entities can indeed be materially real. Social structures, for example, are made up of humans which are materially real (have a material base), and hence social structures are themselves materially real.

to understand the causal mechanisms (e.g., emergently related entities) which interact to produce events. Because we can only know these mechanisms through their effects, and given we are not able to 'step outside' of our knowledge (reality is understood through discourse), attempts to identify mechanisms within critical realism must always be recognised as fallible (Fleetwood, 2014).

Among early coaching work which explicitly claimed to be underpinned by the philosophy of critical realism, Keegan et al. (2010) conducted an investigation of coach, parent and peer influences on motivation in athletes. Specifically, semi-structured focus groups were conducted with seventy-nine athletes to understand their perceptions of behaviours that could be used by coaches, parents and peers to (positively and negatively) influence motivation. Criticising previous work which had deductively applied motivational models to research studies, Keegan et al. (2010) asserted that work should instead investigate the motivational climate without giving preference to any specific theory (especially prior to commencement of data collection) and remain open minded. As such, the authors first engaged in an inductive content analysis before comparing themes to previous theory. Coaches, parents and peers were reported as being capable of influencing athlete motivation by using a range of (similar or different) behaviours. For example, it was suggested that through using feedback or evaluative communication, coaches, parents and peers could all positively or negatively influence the motivation of athletes. Meanwhile, coaches and parents' use of leadership behaviours/styles, emotional and affective responses/styles and pre-performance motivating behaviours were found to play a role in invariably influencing athlete motivation.

Individual themes were also identified for the ways in which coaches, parents and peers differed in terms of the behaviours that they could employ to shape athlete motivation. Here, coaches were found to be unique (when compared to parents and peers) in that their instruction and pedagogic considerations were reported to influence motivation. Meanwhile, parents' support, facilitation and involvement (e.g., in instructing athletes or facilitating independent practice to coaching sessions) were perceived by athletes to influence their motivation. Lastly, for peers, relationships, social interaction, collaboration, altruistic behaviours and competition were reported

as being capable of influencing athlete motivation. Despite providing a comprehensive overview of behaviours employed by coaches and other stakeholders (i.e., parents and peers) which could influence athlete motivation, this study often failed to account for the means through which (i.e., *how*, *why* and *under which circumstances*) specific behaviours influenced motivation (positively or negatively). Even when making reference to previous theory, Keegan et al. (2010) mainly failed to account for the *mechanisms* through which behaviours influenced motivation. Instead, previous studies were only introduced to confirm whether the findings conformed with or were positioned in contrast to the respondent's suggestions. Crucially then, this study appears to bypass a cornerstone of critical realism – the central focus on generating *causal explanation* of emergent phenomena (Bhaskar, 1975). Indeed, the only reference to critical realism in the paper is made to caution against using a single paradigm or theory to guide the examination of the motivational climate. Without deeper causal explanation, we are left with the impression that behaviours can be uncritically employed by practitioners which will then inevitably influence the outcomes of others (i.e., athletes) in relatively straightforward means.

North (2017) later provided the most detailed account of how critical realism might be applied in the field of sport coaching to date. Specifically, his work advocated the use (and further refinement) of a model or 'sport coaching ontology', which was claimed to be capable of supporting interdisciplinary thinking and research. The model is named the embedded, relational and emergent (ERE) model and is based on the view that sport coaching research should be centred on a biopsychosocial ontology. Specifically, the model positions sport coaching as embedded (i.e., because it consists of a depth ontology situated in space and time), relational and emergent (i.e., because it cannot be understood through reduction to the sum of its parts; interactions between entities – which can change over time – must be sought to understand the 'whole'; North, 2017). Further, the ERE model suggests that all sport coaching contexts are: a) embedded (in space, time, physical, psychological, social and cultural orders), b) goal-oriented (directed and informed by goals), c) draw upon and are constrained or enabled by resources (e.g., sociocultural, institutional, intrapersonal and individual factors), d) associated with reasoning, reflecting and strategising

(coaches make decisions, initiate strategies and reflect on these), and e) imbued with actions and outcomes (i.e., coaches behave in certain ways which has an implication on outcomes).

North (2017) advocated that researchers consider how the actions and outcomes of stakeholders are accounted for in light of specific contextual goal-orientations and stakeholder/environmental resources, reasoning, reflecting and strategising. Furthermore, a four-level typology of coaching was presented, whereby sociocultural, institutional, interpersonal, and individual layers must be acknowledged. The sociocultural layer represents the impact of national sporting agencies or government (wider social and cultural forces). Institutional layers understand the influence of national governing bodies, clubs, schools or more local governing bodies of particular sports/activities. More immediate social and psychological components are encapsulated within the interpersonal layer (i.e., coach-athlete relationships and team dynamics), and the individual layer identifies with physical, biological and psychological factors at the level of the coach or athlete (North, 2017). Importantly, these layers are viewed as causally interacting with one another to emergently produce entities or events of sport coaching.

In using this model to research coach effectiveness, North (2017) conducted an ethnographic case study within a kayak slalom performance development context, which included interviews and participant observations with/of a range of stakeholders (e.g., coaches, athletes, managers, programme leads and parents) and in a range of settings (e.g., sessions, development reviews, competition, meetings). In particular, components of the ERE model were utilised to identify the goals of coaches and stakeholders, and to provide examples of practices and events which occurred, before breaking these down to investigate their causal underpinnings. The coaching goals were reported to be negotiated, developed and influenced at four levels: sociocultural, institutional, interpersonal and individual. For example, Sport England at a sociocultural level had provided funding and asked governing bodies to produce a pathway for performers to move from a 'beginner' stage through to high performance. At an institutional level, the Kenningham Canoeing Performance Training Academy had targets to produce performers who were capable of winning medals at the 2020 Olympic Games. In line with these more macro- or

meso-level goals, the head coach, in conjunction with his line manager, the performers and their parents, also established detailed yearly and seasonal targets. Building upon these yearly or seasonal goals, 6-weekly plans were set, which then informed the goals at a sessional level – these goals were adaptable and dependent upon given resources (e.g., weather, availability). Yearly and seasonal goals for the performers concerned moving up the divisional tiers of the kayak slalom league structure, while 6-weekly goals were generally more oriented around physical, psychological, technical, tactical, and social or lifestyle development factors. The head coach himself also held goals (i.e., to establish and maintain a successful development programme) reflecting his position within the organisation, as well as his income and the security of his position. However, these goals of the coach were stated to be largely implicit and thus only identifiable through actions, outcomes, strategies and resources (North, 2017).

Further exploring the application of the model, the research then provided an account of the actions of stakeholders within the context. For example, describing one of the training sessions, the research highlighted the coach's session design (i.e., activities used to work on a water feature and develop technique). Behaviours of the coach derived through observation were also illuminated. For example, silence, interspersed with encouragement and technical feedback was used to allow athletes to problem solve and navigate the course which had been set. Whistles were also implemented by the coach to denote praise, given the conditions of the water rushing through the course made it difficult for verbal praise to be heard. Questioning toward the end of the session was also utilised before providing further feedback to the canoeists. In light of the aforementioned goal-orientations and actions within the context, *strategies* of the coach were then explored (as proximal causes). As an example, one of the strategies employed by the coach when managing behaviour was to scold (i.e., remonstrate with or rebuke) to make the individual or group aware of their behaviour and the implications of this, but then to nest this within a wider strategy of trust and humour to circumvent too much negativity.

Specific resources at the four levels (sociocultural, institutional, interpersonal and individual) were then explored to further support and explain some of the mechanisms being

described and how they were enabled or constrained. For instance, at a sociocultural level it was highlighted that the programme would not have existed without the societal and political value of winning medals, or funding from the governing body. Further, the influence of 'popular science' (e.g., Dweck, 2006; Ericsson, Krampe, & Tesch-Römer, 1993) was illustrated as having a significant influence on the development of the programme. At an institutional level, the facilities, wider performance development programmes, programme managers, coaches and communities of practice were all stated to inform delivery. Cultural resources were also developed whereby commonly agreed and shared values were established (i.e., commitment, ownership, responsibility and personal excellence) in attempt to influence the strategies employed. Among other resources at the institutional level, the programme was tied in with a well-regarded local high school, which provided initial opportunities to identify talent. Moreover, the coach was able to draw upon and consult other coaches as well as coach development programmes.

Resources at an individual level focused upon the biographies of the coach and the main athletes studied. Interviews with the head coach suggested that his limited parental support and access to finances when he was younger had encouraged him to take responsibility and drive his own development. He was a kayak slalom performer himself, a business graduate, and was open to new learning or the implementation of research. The coach's strategy of humour was stated to have been developed organically, although this may have been influenced by previous experiences of humour with his father. The two athletes were both stated to be small in stature, intelligent, kind natured and had a sense of adventure or fun. One of the athletes, 'Eric', was very talkative, analytical and open to learning. Another athlete, 'Mag', was stated to be more 'happy go lucky', relaxed, forgetful, confident (but not arrogant), humorous, polite and daring. Finally, at an interpersonal level, the culture, relationships and practices that emerged were highlighted as being related to the strategies of the coach. In particular, these factors gave stakeholders an understanding and sense of hierarchy, while they maintained close and personal relationships. This also coincided with the overall philosophy (to focus on the development of psychological skills in athletes).

Shared understandings of the development and maintenance of such resources were positioned as a key element to the success of the programme and its coaching (North, 2017).

North (2017) argued that the strength of his work was that it allowed the research context to 'speak for itself', providing a resonant picture for coaching practitioners, and also permitting a platform for extension through further engagement with theoretical work. The ethnography valuably highlights a detailed picture of the coaching context studied, and elements (or entities) which emergently interacted to explain the observed events. However, the account presents findings relating to sections of the model in isolation, and, in doing so, paints a somewhat fragmented picture of the coaching context. Some connections between entities were discussed, however, what remains difficult to grasp is an appreciation of where the entities and their related mechanisms fitted together to explain the events which had taken place. Further, although a brief attempt to explain the use of humour was made, drawing upon the work of Lars Tore Ronglan and Kenneth Aggerholm (e.g., Aggerholm & Ronglan, 2012), very little reference to (other) theory was made to explain the entities or mechanisms present. Perhaps this was not the aim of the study, as North (2017) himself acknowledged the work to provide a platform for the context to 'speak for itself', and that it served as *a tool* for future coaching research from a critical realist perspective to pay greater attention to the integration of theory. While data nor theory should master drive research in a critical realist project, theory is nonetheless a crucial and indispensable element in providing more sophisticated and resonant explanation to identify causal mechanisms (Kempster & Parry, 2011). As such, further work is required here to appraise and explain the influence of coaching practice within a critical realist paradigm. Specifically, research could consider the means through which intensive methodologies (such as those employed in the study described above) could be used to combine data and theory in order to provide causal explanations of influence in-situ.

Alongside the work of North, and picking up on an earlier introduced theory of orchestration (see section 2.3), the paradigm of critical realism has also been used to investigate the orchestrative practices of athletes. Only Raabe et al. (2017) have explicitly focused on the extent to

which pathos also exists as a feature in the lives of athletes and how athletes, too, engage in acts of orchestration. Usefully generating fresh perspectives on the sources of pathos experienced by athletes using semi-structured interviews, this study reported that instead of simply managing ambiguity, coaches can also *create* ambiguity for athletes. Here, it was suggested that coaches control many decisions relating to athletes' participation in sport, may have conflicting beliefs and opinions to athletes (i.e., about how to best prepare for competitions), and that coaches often fail to appropriately communicate enough information (e.g., feedback or communication of team line-ups) to athletes. In addition, other sources of ambiguity for athletes arose from conflicting beliefs with teammates, novelties presented by collegiate athletics (e.g., higher performance standards) and the significance of injuries.

Raabe et al. (2017) also valuably unearthed strategies which were employed by athletes to orchestrate the pathos that they faced. Specifically, athletes reported communicating with coaches (e.g., to attempt to gain additional control, gather more feedback or reduce contradictory beliefs), self-orchestration (e.g., maintaining a positive attitude and regulating emotions to cope with challenges), and the importance of relationship building (i.e., with coaches, support staff, teammates and family) as key strategies to orchestrate the pathos which they faced. Although providing an important contribution to the literature by depicting the extent to which pathos was evident for athletes and strategies used by athletes to orchestrate, this study lacked a critical exploration of *how* and *why* athletes orchestrated in relation to *specific* situations and (inter)actions with others in-situ. Instead, broad themes of *what* athletes (thought they) did when they orchestrated were presented. In order to further rigour and understanding in this area, more nuanced and detailed understandings of *what*, *how* and *why* athletes orchestrate in relation to specific situated acts of others (e.g. coaches) could be developed. Researching the relational (orchestrated) acts of coaches and athletes in this way would help to develop a clearer picture of the impact of orchestration (i.e., what was the outcome of orchestrated acts) and thus its (non)influence.

Critical realism, then, provides a novel paradigmatic position through which sport coaching research can be informed. To date, the application of this paradigm in coaching work is very much

in its infancy. Indeed, the work of North (2017) and Raabe et al. (2017) has provided an important contribution and starting point, upon which further work can build. Specifically, the critical realist research approach appears to be well positioned to generate causal explanatory theory, through identifying entities, emergent mechanisms and how they interact to produce events. This provides a fresh perspective of causality and explanation, which, it is argued other paradigms alone (although providing valuable contributions themselves) are incapable of achieving (Fleetwood, 2014). Sceptics have critiqued Bhaskar's ontological position on the basis that it defines ontology 'as both a fallible interpretation of reality and as a definitive definition of reality beyond our knowledge claims' (Cruickshank, 2004, p. 567). However, this account fails to acknowledge an important distinction in critical realism: firstly, what is meant by reality, and, secondly, that reality *can* but *does not always* exist independently of our identification of it (Fleetwood, 2014). Furthermore, it fails to distinguish between ontological realism and epistemic relativism; critical realism attempts to generate causal theory of phenomena (reality), while recognising that theory of this reality is inherently fallible (Ronkainen & Withshire, 2019). Cruickshank's (2004) critique also asserted that:

> 'if one accepted that social reality was to be defined in terms of individuals and shared meanings then one would need to adopt an hermeneutic approach to social science, rather than arguing for a causal account of structures acting upon individuals' (p. 575).

However, this statement is countered by critical realists who have implied that social reality (e.g., social structure) is (partly) an emergent property of the interactions between individuals which, in turn, can (causally) influence action by shaping dispositions/beliefs alongside conscious reflexivity of the agent (Elder-Vass, 2010a). As such, agents and structures are seen as distinct but related; structure is both influenced by agents and their constructions/interactions, but also causally influences the action of agents alongside other entities in its own right. Structure, then, is indeed capable of being real (causally efficacious) within this position which allows a role for the integration of hermeneutics (Elder-Vass, 2012a). In other words, realist ontology is compatible with *moderate* social constructionism;

just because entities are capable of being socially constructed does not mean that we should abandon any notion of causality (as advocated by a realist position; Elder-Vass, 2012a).

Some have suggested that, although providing a compelling redirection toward the essential nature of ontology, critical realism has yet to fully realise its potential in terms of having an influence within the fields it has been used to research (Potter, 2003). This is perhaps because few studies have explicitly focussed on connections between philosophy, methodology, empirical data and impact. Although Wiltshire (2018) highlighted the usefulness of critical realism in pursuing impact and interdisciplinarity, few studies have explored or reported on how critical realism has actually served to emancipate or shape practice. In sum, critical realism is rapidly becoming a diverse school of thought, which holds strong potential to support (or in critical realist terms '*under labour*') coaching research. Currently, it remains a neophyte paradigm (when compared to positivism or interpretivism, for example), and warrants further exploration to establish its potential within the field.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to provide a detailed overview of the extant coaching literature, conducted within different paradigms. Specifically, it has provided both a synthesis of key findings and research themes, as well as a critique of the potential and pitfalls of each paradigmatic approach. What appears to be lacking from the current literature base is detailed, multifaceted and sophisticated explorations of how coaching practice is related to (i.e., influences, or not) athlete outcomes (e.g., performance). Although positivism has provided us with an examination of coaching practice variables that are (simplistically) related to athlete outcome variables, and the role that coach education may play in influencing these outcomes, accounts have largely been conducted in a reductionist manner, homogenising athletes, and ignoring the complexities and ambiguity which exists as an inherent feature of idiosyncratic coaching contexts. Interpretivism has sought to revindicate complexity within coaching research, examining *what*, *how*, *when*, and *why* coaches (inter)act within highly ambiguous circumstances which requires, but is not limited to, political, emotional and power-laden practices. Save for a small number of papers, this body of

work has widely ignored accounts which give voice or agency to the athlete in understanding their complex involvement within the coaching context, however. What exists is a heavy focus on the coach, or athlete perspectives which have *implications for* coaching practitioners, not how the two parties relationally interact to influence one another over time. Despite providing rich understandings of sense making and the role of social structure/agency in shaping action, there is a lacuna in interpretivist work surrounding attempts to explain the *mechanisms* through which social structure and conscious agency together, are capable of shaping action (i.e., which entities at a level of social structure are responsible for shaping action alongside agency, and how?).

Poststructuralism has provided another platform through which powerful existing discourse in sport coaching has been able to be critiqued to provide theory-informed interventions for coaching practice. Poststructuralist work has, however, been largely pessimistic, and has also failed to recognise the real referents of the interplay between structure and agency in informing action. Critical realism, on the other hand, has provided a novel set of meta-theoretical assumptions to underpin coaching work, but these have only very recently begun to be applied and little research has meaningfully engaged with theory. While the foregoing review of literature provides a broad overview of advances in the field, it simultaneously highlights the increasingly fragmented nature of our literature base. It is therefore difficult to establish a clear overview of the *scale* upon which research focused on coach influence has engaged with different: (a) paradigms, (b) research designs/methodologies, (c) methods, (d) sports, (e) stakeholders included as participants (e.g., athletes, coaches, parents) and (f) variables (e.g., coach behaviour/athlete outcomes), and what the implications of this might be. Resultantly, it is difficult for researchers and practitioners to make sense of this corpus. In order to bring greater clarity, a detailed review is required which highlights systematic trends in work focused on coaching practice and athlete outcomes. Specifically, it is important to identify the contributions and pitfalls of such work in order to consider implications for researchers and coaching practitioners, and to consider meaningful directions for future research. Thus, Chapter 3 presents a systematic review and critical realist critique of literature focused on the relationships between coaching practice and athlete outcomes.

Chapter 3: Examining the relationships between coaching practice and athlete "outcomes": A systematic review and critical realist critique

3.1 Introduction

As has been alluded to throughout Chapters 1 and 2, sports participation is associated with an extensive range of positive athlete outcomes (Holt & Neely, 2011). These include sport-specific skill proficiency and knowledge (Hastie, Calderón, Rolim, & Guarino, 2013), life skills and motivation (Gould & Carson, 2008), health and well-being, self-esteem and confidence (Beckman, Rossi, Hanrahan, Rynne, & Dorovolomo, 2017), and physiological development (Vickery, Dascombe, Duffield, Kellett, & Portus, 2013). Negative outcomes such as burnout (Myer et al., 2015), body dissatisfaction (McMahon & Penney, 2013) and dropout (Fraser-Thomas, Côté, & Deakin, 2008) have also been connected to sport participation, among many others. However, such outcomes are the result of more than mere participation in sport; they are shaped by a range of social and contextual factors (Holt & Neely, 2011). Of these, the sports coach has been strongly implicated in directing or contributing to various athlete 'outcomes' (Horn, 2008).

Jones, Edwards, and Viotto Filho (2016) suggest the coach's primary purpose is to support athlete learning and performance enhancement. Yet, coaches have been found to frame their roles in nuanced ways (Gilbert & Trudel, 2004b), and to focus only on learning and performance would ignore a wider range of physical and psychosocial implications of coaching (Mallett & Rynne, 2010). Indeed, one of the most prominent conceptualisations in this regard suggests that coaches should purposefully pursue a broader range of athlete outcomes, which can be considered 'variations in athletes' attitudes, behaviors, or performance' (Côté & Gilbert, 2009, p. 309). Specifically, Côté and Gilbert (2009) advocated maximising athletes' competence, confidence, connection and character. This lack of clarity concerning the scope and variety of implications claimed of coaching underlines the often ill-defined roles of the sport coach in society (Gilbert, Gilbert, & Trudel, 2001; Morgan & Bush, 2016) and the need for research that deals directly with the impact coaches have on their participants.

The volume and scope of research on coaching and particularly coaching practice is now substantial and growing (please see Chapter 2), but the extent to which it has impacted coaching practice and coach education has been questioned (Lyle & Cushion, 2010). One challenge associated with a rapidly evolving knowledge base is the ability of academics and practitioners to keep pace with the change, which:

> limits the ability of (a) researchers to set research agendas and situate their work in the larger context of coaching science, (b) coaches to access and realize [sic] the potential of coaching research, and (c) coach educators to integrate the full scope of coaching research into coach education programs. (Gilbert & Trudel, 2004a, p. 388).

Various reviews of the literature have attempted to redress these issues, providing some useful insights into existing findings and prevalent research approaches (e.g., Kahan, 1999; Gilbert & Trudel, 2004a; Vella, Oades, & Crowe, 2010; Denison & Avner, 2011; Cope, Partington, & Harvey, 2016). However, most reviews focus on specific elements of coach behaviour or research methods in isolation, leaving our understanding of the relationship between coaching practice and athlete outcomes fragmented and unclear. Indeed, in their overview of the conceptual development of sports coaching, Lyle and Cushion (2010, p. 7) found 'few if any links between coaching practice and performance outcomes'.

A lack of connection between coaching practice and athlete outcomes remains a prevalent issue within contemporary coaching literature (Lyle, 2018). Although North's (2017) critical realist critique of coaching science literature presented a potentially valuable framework for interdisciplinary thinking and research with scope to advance the field, it reviewed broad coaching literature (i.e., not solely dedicated to relationships between coaching practice and athlete outcomes), was largely focused on coaching practice, and was presented at a certain level of abstraction. Alongside more abstract frameworks, we require research approaches which allow detailed examinations of the relationships between coaching practice and its influence on athlete outcomes to match the realities of practice. Conceptualisation of the connections between coaching practice and athlete outcomes, and consideration of how this domain can be advanced, is important, because the dearth of such work places a significant restraint on our ability to more fully understand the activity of coaching and hence for research to inform practice.

The purpose of this chapter is, therefore, to systematically and critically review the extant literature which has investigated the impact of coaching practice on athlete outcomes. More specifically, the aim is to provide a clearer picture of how empirical research designs have shaped our existing knowledge by reporting the following characteristics from relevant papers and how they have been employed: (a) paradigms, (b) research designs/methodology, (c) methods, (d) sports, (e) stakeholders included as participants (e.g., athletes, coaches, parents) and (f) which coaching practice and athlete outcome variables have been investigated. Such an overview of the literature may help to identify existing limitations, clarify future research directions, and subsequently influence research, coaching practice and coach education. Indeed, it is hoped that taking stock of existing ways of knowing might stimulate further critical thought about the 'ways that the research we conduct can actually make a difference in the lives of those participating in sport settings and the practitioners working with them' (Gould, 2016, p. 199).

3.2 Method

3.2.1 *Purpose and Function*

Bennie et al. (2017) suggested that as coaching science research continues to expand rigorous reviews are required to comprehend and bring meaning to the ever-increasing database of material. In order to access and refine the breadth of relevant literature now presented in sport coaching a systematic search protocol was adopted in line with Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA; Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, & Altman, 2009). However, in order to understand the state of current literature and its consequent implications for knowledge, rather than exclude research based upon pre-determined positivist notions of methodological quality (i.e., to synthesise the statistical evidence-base and provide recommendations for direct intervention - e.g., Brown & Fletcher, 2017), studies employing a wide range of approaches (e.g., quantitative, qualitative and mixed-method) were included. Thus, conventions were followed for the integration of a diverse body of work into systematic review methodology (e.g., Mays, Pope, & Popay, 2005), which is introduced in greater detail within the succeeding sections.

3.2.2 *Sources and search strategy*

Three levels of searching were utilised to obtain articles pertaining to relationships between coaching practice and athlete outcomes. First, searches of four electronic databases, which have previously been identified as relevant to coaching science literature (Rangeon, Gilbert & Bruner, 2012), were conducted: (a) PsycARTICLES; (b) Science Direct; (c) Sport Discus and (d) Web of Science. Second, 20 relevant journals were selected and electronically searched (see Table 1.0). Finally, citation pearl growing (De Brún & Pearce-Smith, 2009) was utilised to search within reference lists of relevant review articles identified through the sifting process. Articles published up to the search date of January 13th, 2017 were considered for inclusion. The same keyword search strategy was used within all databases and journals: "(sports coaching practice) OR (coaching behavio?r) AND (athlete outcomes)". No start date was set for the inclusion of studies, aiming to incorporate as wide a range of coaching literature as possible.

Table 1.0 - Journals Searched

Journal
Journal of Sports Sciences
Behavior Modification
Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy
Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology
Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis
International Journal of Exercise Science
International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology
International Journal of Sports Science and Coaching
International Sport Coaching Journal
Journal of Sport Behavior
Journal of Sports Science and Medicine
Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport
International Review of Sport and Exercise Psychology
Sports Coaching Review
The Sport Psychologist

Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice

Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research

Sport Sciences for Health

Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health

Scandinavian Journal of Medicine and Science in Sports

3.2.3 *Inclusion and exclusion criteria*

Studies were considered for inclusion if they were published in English language, and contained original empirical data published in a peer-reviewed journal. In pursuit of a more comprehensive review, following Mays et al. (2005) and Dixon-Woods et al. (2006a), articles containing either qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-method data were considered for inclusion.

Although Smith et al. (2016) reported that relationships between independently observed and athlete- or coach-perceived dimensions of practice were weak, arguably all of these perspectives (coach, athlete and independent perceptions) are required if the empirical assessment of practice is to become more sophisticated and authentic to coaching's holistic complexities (Potrac, Brewer, Jones, Armour, & Hoff, 2000). Perceptions of coaching practice and independent observations of coaching practice were therefore included in the present research.

Studies that did not examine directly relationships between coaching practice (e.g., coach behaviour or management of the learning environment) and athlete outcomes (e.g., physiological outcomes, psychological outcomes, or performance outcomes) were excluded. Studies were also excluded if they occurred in lab-based or non-field-based settings (i.e., non-naturalistic coaching contexts), or where the coaching practice was designed by a researcher (i.e., non-naturalistic coaching practice). Research of this nature likely does not account for the highly complex, multifaceted nature of the activity of coaching (Turnnidge & Côté, 2016), limiting the value of findings for practitioners. Further, studies completed in the physical education, injury, executive coaching or clinical domain were excluded.

Contrasting with orthodox systematic review protocols (e.g., Allegranzi et al., 2011; Free et al., 2013), and as alluded to earlier given the aims of the study, research was not excluded on grounds (positivist notions) of methodological rigour or methods used. Instead, the main focus was on identifying research most pertinent to the central questions of the review (Biddle, Wang, Kavussanu, & Spray, 2003). Borrowing directly from the work of Pawson (2006), careful consideration was given to the relevance of research included; the key question posed was is this study good enough to provide *some evidence* that will contribute to the review? Consequently, the worth of each study was examined throughout the review process, not determined beforehand. A key advantage of this approach, in contrast to the strict methodological doctrine guiding some reviews (e.g., Free et al., 2013), was that it permitted the inclusion of 'trustworthy nuggets of information' which responded to the aim of the review, even if the studies were 'technically deficient in some overall sense' (Pawson, 2006, p. 90). For example, studies were included even if they had poorly interpreted results or made unwarranted inferences, but nonetheless presented data which were relevant to addressing the research questions.

3.2.4 *Sifting process*

2609 articles from databases and 4772 articles from empirical journals were returned (total n = 7381). After removing duplicate papers, 7107 articles remained and were taken forward to stage 1 of the sifting process. Figure 1.1. depicts an overview of the full sifting process, conducted in line with PRISMA guidelines (Moher et al., 2009), by stage. Studies were assessed for relevance to the review in three stages, as recommended by Rumbold, Fletcher, and Daniels (2012) and Weiler, Mechelen, Fuller, and Verhagen (2016). In accordance with the inclusion criteria, articles were initially sifted for relevance by title (stage 1), then by reading abstracts (stage 2), and finally by reviewing the full-text versions (stage 3).

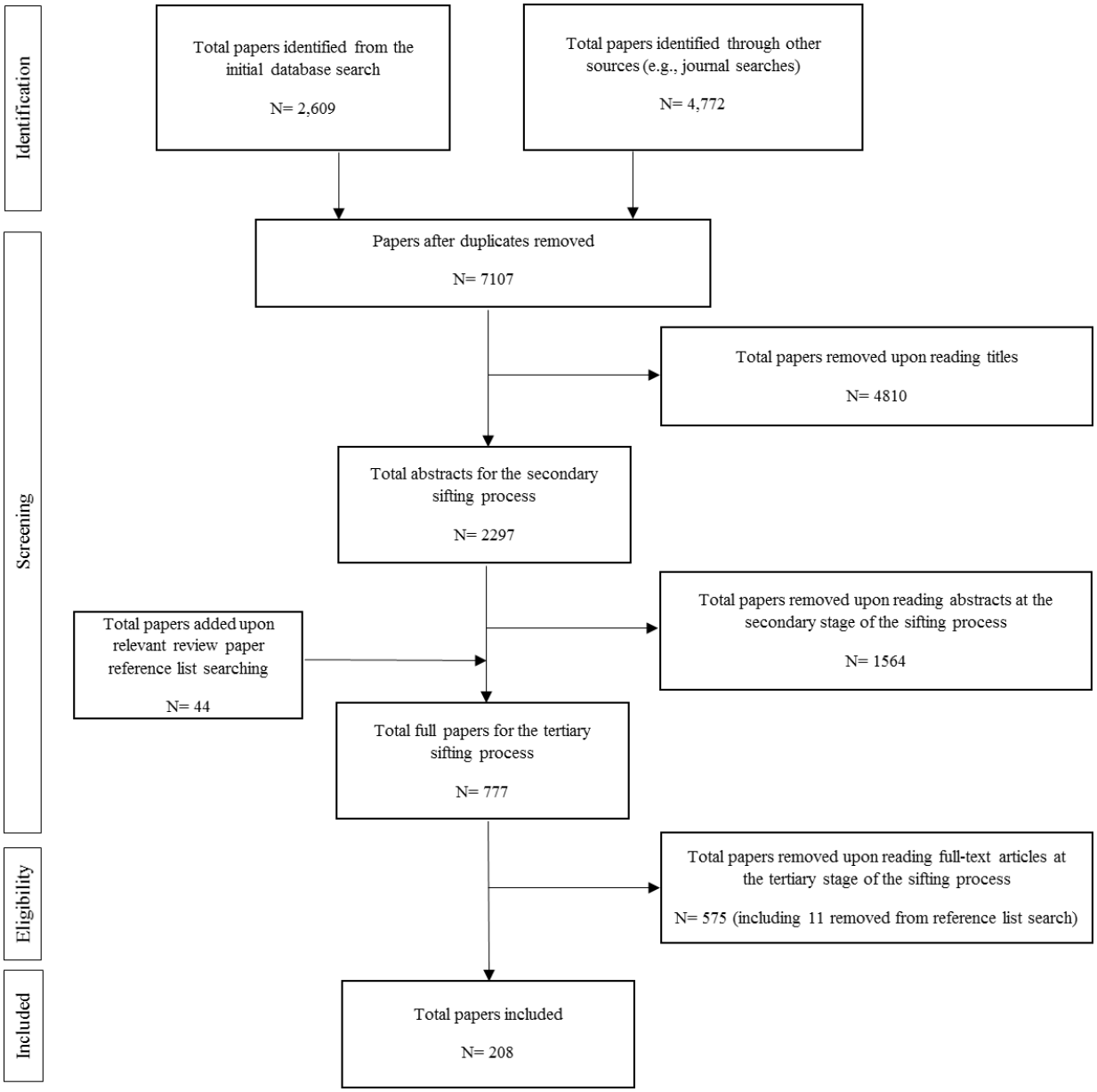

Figure 1.1. – PRISMA flow diagram.

Beyond the work of Siddiqi, House, and Holmes (2006) and Tew, Brabyn, Cook, and Peckham (2016), where 10% of studies were independently screened, a critical friend and I independently sifted through and then discussed 20% of the overall number of papers (n = 1424). Following Langan, Blake, and Lonsdale (2013), any disagreements between reviewers about inclusion suitability were discussed until agreement was reached. If the consensus building process did not lead to agreement, the article was automatically advanced to the next stage of the sifting process, or it was passed on to a third or fourth critical friend to determine inclusion at the final stage.

After stage 1, 4810 studies were excluded (see Figure 1.1.). Subsequently, abstracts of remaining articles were read and a further 1564 studies were removed (stage 2). Relevant review paper reference lists were then searched to include any additional papers which met the inclusion criteria at this stage (*n = 44).* Stage 3 involved reading through the full-texts of articles to assess suitability for the review; 575 articles were removed at this stage. 202[5] articles remained after the full sifting process was completed. These were included in the data extraction process.

3.2.5 *Data extraction and analysis*

Procedures for data extraction were adapted from similar reviews conducted within the field of sport and physical activity (e.g., Park, Lavallee, & Tod, 2013; Sallis, Prochaska, & Taylor, 2000). Detailed coding systems were designed to extract data related to: (a) the paradigmatic, theoretical and methodological approaches utilised; (b) sample characteristics; and (c) athlete outcomes impacted in some way by coaching practice[6]. Wherever possible, a form of coding was adopted where data were extracted and recorded in the same manner in which it was originally reported.

I met with critical friends to interrogate the data extraction using a sample of 20% of the final number of included studies. These studies were selected at random, whilst ensuring a range of quantitative, qualitative and mixed-method papers were considered. Following Clegg (2005) and Pawson (2002), the aim of this process was to understand how we had coded the data from papers and why discrepancies may have occurred. Given one can never fully free themselves of their theoretical preconceptions (Belfrage & Hauf, 2016), the different paradigmatic allegiances, (i.e., the critical realist, constructivist, and positivist standpoints) of critical friends and I were considered an asset to strengthen both the rigour of the extraction process and to guard against bias originating from a single paradigmatic perspective. Different ontological and epistemological viewpoints aided the interpretation of the way in which data had been coded, stimulating

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[5] Two-hundred and eight individual studies were included within the final data extraction process, as some papers included more than one relevant study.

[6] A full list of reviewed articles can be viewed in the online version of this paper.

interdisciplinary thought within the review process; something, it has been argued, critical realism is well positioned to facilitate, and, in some respects, to reconcile (North, 2017).

I carried out data analysis, drawing on concepts of thematic and content analysis as well as conceptual comparison from critical interpretive synthesis (CIS; Surr et al., 2017), which are compatible with systematic search protocols (Thomas & Harden, 2008) and provide knowledge support (Mays et al., 2005). Specifically, this involved a critical analysis of papers, both as individual entities, and in light of other included papers, through thematic and conceptual comparison (Kangasniemi, Kallio, & Pietilä, 2014), generating clear trends to be critically appraised through critical realist critique. Importantly, these concepts from CIS permitted the incorporation of literature conducted from different disciplinary positions and with varied research methods (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006b). The product of the synthesis was not simply a neutral, objective accumulation of data. Instead, I developed a critical realist reading of the findings, which is presented in section 3.3. This involved carefully considering predominant themes evident in papers retrieved (e.g., the methodological approaches selected), in order to propose a potential framework for advances to knowledge (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006b), again, aligning with the vision of the present paper to inform future research, coaching practice and coach education.

3.2.6 *An introduction to critical realism*

As introduced in section 2.5, critical realism has only recently been applied in the field of sport coaching (e.g., North, 2013a, 2013b, 2017), but offers a set of meta-theoretical assumptions (e.g., emergence, ontological depth and causal theory, introduced in greater detail below) which are capable of providing a novel contribution to understanding the influence of practitioners (Elder-Vass, 2010). While it is impractical to attempt to present a single, unifying explanation of critical realism (CR) here, due to the complex assemblage of ideas and debates related to it, the purpose of the remainder of this section is to introduce a general reading of CR, principally according to the work of Bhaskar (1975, 2011, 2015, 2016), before deploying these concepts in the critique of the

literature. A more detailed explanation of critical realism and its relevance to the present thesis is also provided in Chapter 4.

Archer et al. (2016) suggested that critical realists have a broad dissatisfaction with the regularities, law-like and regression-based models frequently sought in positivism. Critical realists are also dissatisfied with the postmodern interpretivist focus, which negates causal explanation, but instead emphasises rich description, processes of meaning making and hermeneutics (Archer et al., 2016). In response, at the heart of CR is the conception of a material, causal, emergent and stratified ontology, and, more specifically, of ontological realism. In other words, the world and its objects or entities are viewed as being real, characterised by depth, and *can* exist independently from our epistemological capacity to know about or identify them (Bhaskar, 1975). According to some realists, there are four key modes of reality: objects and structures can be materially real (e.g., oceans, planets), ideally real (e.g., discourse, beliefs, language, theory), socially real (e.g., organisations, norms, rules, or conventions) or artefactually real (e.g., buildings, computers; Fleetwood, 2004)[7]. However, such reality is only able to be known through our discourses about it, which we are unable to step outside of (North, 2017). Experiences are very much interpreted and made sense of by human agents, although these experiences are often 'out of phase' with actual events which can occur independently of perception (Bhaskar, 1975). Archer (1998) suggested that we should not confine social causes to the mental or to meanings. Instead, critical realists seek explanatory understanding of the causal powers of real entities, rejecting the view that all beliefs are always of equal value (in terms of truth; Clark, MacIntyre & Cruickshank, 2007). In recognition of this and of discourse being real itself, CR assumes that scientific activity remains fallible and open to constant revision (Collier, 1994). This double hermeneutic, whereby social science is both affected by society, but is also an effective agent which can shape society (Bhaskar, 1978), opens up the potential for the agency of practitioners to be transformed through shaping the ways in which they conceive of and practice the real world (discursively real entities affect emergence).

[7] The view I take of different modes of reality (e.g., material and socially real entities) is discussed at greater length in Chapter 4.

Making such assertions regarding the world and our knowledge of it requires deeper exploration of how we view its makeup. For Bhaskar (1975), the world is made up of three layers, which represent *ontological depth*. These layers comprise the *empirical* (i.e., events that are observed and experienced), the *actual* and the *real* (i.e., which consist of events, and objects or structures causally interacting to produce these events, respectively). This stratified view of ontology implies that everyday observable or experienced events (e.g., coaching actions or responses) are caused by an underlying reality which is not directly understandable to us through the events themselves or our observations or experiences of them (Bhaskar, 2011). Real objects and structures are seen to have causal powers or liabilities, and the activation of these (through what is known as mechanisms) occurs at the level of the actual to constitute events, but our experiences and observation of events exists only at the empirical level (Archer, 2007). Causal forces (powers and liabilities) can only be understood through their effects and in the social world many entities (with causal forces) interact simultaneously, meaning they are unable to be simply reduced to objects or structures at a lower level. These entities and forces instead interact in an *emergent* and relational fashion making the task of understanding events and their underpinning causal properties incredibly complex (Elder-Vass, 2010). In more clearly defining the notion of emergence, events cannot be understood as being simply the sum of their parts. Instead, 'it is the way that a set of parts is related to each other at a given point in time that determines the joint effect they have on the world at that moment' (Elder-Vass, p. 23). This process of interaction between the parts is also commonly referred to as the 'mechanism'.

In light of such emergent relationships, there is a need to distinguish between what critical realists conceive of as open and closed systems. Closed systems include (more stable) mechanisms operating to produce a regular pattern of events (Sayer, 1992), for example planetary movement in the solar system. Open systems (i.e., sport coaching) are comprised of myriad mechanisms (with emergently related and contingently acting entities, causal powers and properties; Bhaskar, 2015). Consequently, an understanding and grounding of analysis *in context* is imperative to begin to unearth the nuances of these mechanisms (North, 2013a). It is this very nature of emergence which

also provides the bedrock for interdisciplinarity; we often require theory from multiple scientific fields to comprehend how causal mechanisms emergently combine to produce events (Bhaskar, 2010). For instance, biological, psychological and sociological concepts can be combined in order to understand the complex interaction of real entities and how they emergently produce action (North, 2017). These points are important in conceptualising the way in which interactions between coaching practice and athlete outcomes operate according to a critical realist perspective.

CR, then, offered a means to critique the contributions and limitations of different disciplinary and paradigmatic positions (applied to specific questions) during the review, and to theorise a possible path for advancement. Further, it also provided a relevant platform to consider the integration of theory from these different positions and if it may be possible to conceptualise issues in an interdisciplinary manner (North, 2017; Wiltshire, 2018). To be clear, although CR offers a useful framework to do so, the aim of this specific review was not to identify how and why coaching practice was related to particular athlete outcomes (Brannan, Fleetwood, O'Mahoney, & Vincent, 2017). Indeed, this work is addressed later in the thesis (e.g., Chapter 6). Instead, the principal aim was to investigate how relationships between coaching practice and athlete outcomes have been researched to date.

3.3 Results and discussion

Two hundred and eight studies examined relationships between naturalistic coaching practice and athlete outcomes. Findings are presented and discussed in order of: (a) publication timeline, (b) paradigms, (c) research design, (d) methods, (e) sports and perspectives, and (f) coaching practice-athlete outcome relationships.

3.3.1 *Publication timeline*

The current review retrieved papers published from 1982 to 2017. Year of publication was categorised into five-year periods (see Table 1.1). The rate of publication of research investigating the relationship between naturalistic coaching practice and athlete outcomes started relatively slowly, with the earliest recorded paper retrieved within this review published in late 1982. 90.4%

of papers identified within the parameters of the present study were published from the year 2001 onwards.

Table 1.1 – Year of publication of studies.

Year of publication	Number of studies	Studies (%)	Yearly Mean
1978-1982	1	0.5	0.2
1983-1987	3	1.4	0.6
1988-1992	5	2.4	1
1993-1997	3	1.4	0.6
1998-2002	12	5.8	2.4
2003-2007	23	11.1	4.6
2008-2012	73	35.1	14.6
2013-2017	88	42.3	17.6
Total	208	100	5.8

Compared to telemedicine, one small strand of healthcare literature, which had 5,911 publications between 1964 and 2003 (Moser et al., 2004), the fact that only 208 total articles were retrieved pertaining to naturalistic coaching practice and athlete outcomes in the present study shows that this domain of inquiry is still in its infancy. Despite this, a marked increase in papers published around the turn of the millennium may be explained by wider calls to develop the sophistication of coaching research (e.g., Jones, Armour, & Potrac, 2002; Potrac et al., 2000; Strean, 1998) in pursuit of a more holistic understanding of coaching practice (Côté & Gilbert, 2009; Kidman, 2001; Mouchet, Harvey, & Light, 2014). Furthermore, data presented in Table 1.1 would imply that research output in this field is currently continuing to rise, year on year. Such a discernible increase underlines the importance of the present study in providing a critical overview of literature and its meta-theoretical underpinning, to give clearer direction to future research, to practitioners, and to coach educators.

3.3.2 *Paradigms*

The majority of research did not state which paradigm had guided the investigation of the interplay between coaching practice and athlete outcomes (n = 194 studies). In spite of this, many

of these papers were clearly influenced by positivism (e.g., Fransen, Decroos, Broek, & Boen, 2016; Vazou, Ntoumanis, & Duda, 2006). Only a small number (n = 14) of papers were explicitly constructivist or interpretivist in nature (e.g., Light & Robert, 2010). This mirrors findings previously documented elsewhere (Brustad, 1997; Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2006; Gilbert & Trudel, 2004a; Lyle, 1999), pertaining to a heavy emphasis on positivism in coaching literature. North (2013b) suggests this is likely due to the strong early influence of psychology's dominant meta-theoretical assumptions, on the domain. Positivism has valuably contributed to our knowledge of relationships between coaching practice and athlete outcomes. Specifically, work in this paradigm has highlighted features of coaching practice shown to be related (sometimes mediated through other variables) to some athlete outcome variables, and in some cases the strength of this relationship has also been indicated (e.g., Vazou, Ntoumanis, & Duda, 2006).

Due to its lack of consideration for contextual influence (Miles, 2009) and assumptions of the domain being linear and uncomplicated (North, 2017), positivism has however frequently been cited as being poorly equipped to research within social domains such as sport coaching (Benton & Craib, 2001; Cushion, 2007; Danermark, Ekström, Jakobsen, & Karlsson, 1997). Martin, Sugarman, and Thompson (2003) critically remarked that the reductive ontology of positivism cannot alone account for the reflexive and emergent nature of human behaviour and cognition, especially within circumstances often characterised by high levels of ambiguity and pathos (Jones & Wallace, 2005). According to CR, research with its roots in scientism cannot explore how entities of open systems interact to produce outcomes. By seeking law-like regularities, patterns, or constant conjunctions, positivist studies reduce (what can be known about) the world to our observation and experiences of it (Bhaskar, 1975). This is problematic, as although we may be able to understand that a certain aspect of coaching practice (e.g., instruction) has preceded, or is related to an athlete outcome (e.g., performance), we cannot comprehend the continuous process by (and mechanisms through) which the coaching practice has actually influenced the athlete (or not) (Sayer, 1992). Yet, this is not to say that positivist science cannot play a role in advancing our

knowledge of sport coaching; positivist-informed investigations, in fact, often provide us with the impetus to investigate more complex dimensions of the activity of coaching.

A small number of papers in the present review explicitly claimed to fall within an interpretivist paradigm, viewing the world as socially constructed (e.g., Gearity & Murray, 2011; Light & Robert, 2010; McCalpin, Evans, & Côté, 2017). In response to the limitations of positivism, interpretivist-informed researchers have argued that their paradigm is better positioned to investigate the nuanced and complex nature of coaching due to its subjectivist epistemology (Potrac, Jones, & Nelson, 2014). Valuably, interpretivism has progressed our understanding of the lived experiences of both coaches and athletes in relation to how they take meaning from coaching practice (e.g., Gearity & Murray, 2011). Rather than seeking law-like regularities, this paradigm has strengthened our grasp of how athletes perceive and may be *influenced* by coaching practice, through ongoing sense making. As such, interpretivism has illuminated some of the ironies, complexities and tensions which must be navigated as an inherent feature of coaching (Jones & Wallace, 2005). However, some cognitivist informed researchers have suggested that these (predominantly sociological) approaches place too heavy an emphasis on complexity, advocating instead the simplicity and structure of models to encapsulate the core process of coaching (Abraham & Collins, 2011; Lyle, 2007).

While interpretivist approaches provide us with a greater exploration of emotional, political and power-ridden factors as inherent features of coaching (Potrac et al., 2014), they do not consider ontology and individual epistemological beliefs to be able to exist separately. As such, some authors have suggested that interpretivism rejects the idea that it is possible to move beyond observation or experience of events (O'Mahoney & Vincent, 2014). Resultantly, tensions between relations of structure and agency are present within constructivism (Klotz, 2001) and the extent to which one or the other of these factors play a role in determining action remains a topic of prominent debate (Purdy & Jones, 2011). This often-polarised debate, has led to a lack of research that connects the micro, meso and macro in the activity of coaching. Indeed, there remains a need to pay attention to 'the detail of coaching practice, the forces that shape coaching practice and the

interconnections that run between them' (Cushion, 2007, p. 399). Here, as is further argued, CR offers one potential avenue to explore how coaching practice is embedded within, shapes, and is shaped by its broader context. For instance, Elder-Vass (2007) suggested that we should account for both structural influences (i.e., through habitus), and conscious agency or agential reflexivity when understanding the determination of human action. In other words, human action should be viewed as the outcome of 'a continuous interaction between dispositions and reflexivity' (Elder-Vass, 2007, p. 325). It is important to acknowledge that this is only one conception of structure-agency relations and that other accounts of such interaction are available (e.g., please see section 2.3; Archer, 2003; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Crossley, 2001).

Perhaps one of the reasons why there is a dearth of research able to connect coaching practice to athlete outcomes is because prevailing paradigmatic approaches commit to the *epistemic fallacy.* In other words, they operate on a flat ontology (ontology and epistemology are collapsed into one another) unable to extend beyond the level of the empirical (i.e., what we can observe and experience). Positivism principally provides us with accounts of nomothetic, law-like findings, or constant conjunctions, while interpretivism typically provides us with knowledge for understanding. However, neither of these perspectives alone are able to distinguish reality from our knowledge of it, meaning explanatory or complex causal accounts are severely restricted. CR, on the other hand, is able to distinguish ontological realism from epistemic relativism, and, as such, provides us with a basis to understand the causal and explanatory mechanisms which underpin *how*, *when*, *why*, and *under which circumstances* coaching practice is related to athlete outcomes (or not) through retroduction[8]. Importantly, what should be remembered here, is that prevailing paradigms in this area (i.e., positivism and interpretivism) provide useful, albeit limited contributions to such stratified causal explanation from a CR standpoint (Pawson, 2006).

[8] Retroduction – a mode of analysis which constantly seeks to answer the question: what are the emergent causal (theoretical) factors (including eliminating alternative causes) at play, and how do they interact to produce events (Bhaskar, 1975)?

Frustratingly, many studies in this review (e.g., Claringbould, Knoppers, & Jacobs, 2015) failed to explicitly acknowledge their underpinning paradigm, leaving ontological and epistemological uncertainty. It is recommended that authors explicitly acknowledge and consider the philosophical and paradigmatic assumptions underpinning their research. This would aid interpretation by other researchers, as well as promote interdisciplinarity and permeations across traditional boundaries (North, 2013b). Specifically, it would allow more rigorous assessment of the quality of research according to its underlying ontological and epistemological assumptions. Moreover, when considered alongside research design, it would enable enhanced understanding of the scope and ability of the research to, for example, be generalised, or to problematise through rich description.

3.3.3 *Research design*

In line with other reviews of coaching literature (e.g., Gilbert & Trudel, 2004a), the largest proportion of research (n = 173, 83.2%) was conducted using a quantitative approach (see Table 1.2). Proportionately, a small number of studies were either qualitative, or multi-method (i.e., employing multiple forms of either quantitative or qualitative research methods), while a smaller proportion of studies again were mixed-method (i.e., using both qualitative and quantitative research methods).

Table 1.2 – Research design of studies.

Research design	Number of studies
Quantitative	54
Qualitative	23
Quantitative (cross-sectional)	56
Mixed-method	4
Quantitative (correlational)	15
Multi-method (observational, cross-sectional)	1
Multi-method (quantitative, cross-sectional)	4
Quantitative (longitudinal)	14
Multi-method (longitudinal, quantitative)	2
Multi-method (quantitative)	9
Multi-method (qualitative)	3

Multi-method (quantitative, cross-sectional, longitudinal)	1
Quantitative (prospective)	5
Mixed-method (observational single group)	1
Qualitative (cross-case)	1
Multi-method (quantitative, randomised controlled trial)	1
Quantitative (non-experimental)	1
Multi-method (experimental, longitudinal, quantitative)	1
quantitative (correlational, multivariate)	1
Quantitative (time-lagged)	2
Quantitative (field correlational)	1
Quantitative (longitudinal, correlational)	2
Qualitative (case study narrative)	1
Qualitative (case study)	1
Qualitative (diary)	1
Quantitative (correlational, prospective)	1
Quantitative (cross-sectional, correlational)	1
Quantitative (prospective, longitudinal)	1
Total	208

Among the quantitative research, a large number of papers were further defined as cross-sectional or correlational in nature (with many of these studies also employing regression or multiple regression analyses). Due to the coding process in the present study, if quantitative papers did not specifically state that they were cross-sectional or correlational, they were coded as 'quantitative'; clearly, the majority of the quantitative papers would have been either cross-sectional or correlational (but could not be coded in this manner). Consequently, much of the research in this area cannot assume directionality or causality between practice and outcomes (Sedgwick, 2014). Instead, it can only be inferred that a relationship is present, the strength of this relationship, the influence of one variable in predicting a dependent variable (e.g., when including regression analyses), or the influence of multiple variables in predicting one dependent variable (e.g., when including multiple regression analyses).

Although quantitative research designs have provided researchers and practitioners with a basic understanding that certain elements of coaching practice may be linked to certain athlete

outcomes (i.e., the *what*), critical understandings of *how*, *when*, *why*, and *under which circumstances* these relations occur and may be most effective remain lacking (Jones, Potrac, Cushion, & Ronglan, 2011). Athletes have widely been treated as a homogenous agential entity, limiting the ability of research to resonate with 'on the ground' coaching interactions, through neglecting the notion that athletes can, and do, respond to the same coaching practice in a heterogeneous fashion. The limited number of qualitative and mixed-method approaches have allowed us to begin to redress some of these issues through generating understanding at the level of the individual athlete. However, in order to further assess the potential and limitations of all research designs there is need to pay close attention to the specific methods deployed.

3.3.4 *Methods*

The most frequently used research method was questionnaires, followed by interviews and observation, with 17 different research methods being utilised in total (see Table 1.3). A substantial proportion of papers used a single method design (n = 174, 83.7%). Studies employing this approach have tended to use questionnaires to assess perceptions of coaching practice as well as perceptions of athlete outcomes, before investigating the relationship between these variables (e.g., Goudas, 1998; Price & Weiss, 2013). In implementing questionnaires at one static time point (e.g., the end of the session), research of this nature has often negated the *temporal* dimension (and by extension the influence of other variables) surrounding the development of athlete outcomes. For instance, athletes' interpretations of variables were likely to have changed throughout different time points in a session, rendering the static time point measurement of somewhat restricted value. Only 34 (16.3%) papers approached their research questions using more than one research method. The most frequent combinations of methods were questionnaire and competition performance data (n = 8, 3.8%), questionnaire and observation (n = 7, 3.4%), questionnaire and physiological measures (n = 3, 1.4%), and observation and interview (n = 3, 1.4%). These findings are again consistent with broader coaching science reviews (e.g., Gilbert and Trudel, 2004a), which reported that the largest percentage of coaching research had utilised a single-method approach, mainly questionnaires.

CR does not *a priori* determine suitable methodology or methods. It instead subscribes to methodological pluralism; recognising the limits of any methodology and the need to approach phenomena through different methods (Bhaskar, 1975). This does not, however, mean that any method can be applied uncritically to any question, or object of study. 'There should be congruence between the object of study, the assumptions about society and the conceptions of how knowledge is possible, and one's choice of design and method' (Danermark et al., 1997). As the social world necessitates understanding of open systems, ontological depth and emergent powers (according to CR), this clearly has implications for methodological choices (Danermark et al., 1997). As such, the use of more intensive research designs (studying mechanisms in depth, as opposed to patterns), using ethnographic research, including interviews with multiple stakeholders and participant observation, has been argued to be best positioned to generate causal theory within the sport coaching environment (North, 2017). Furthermore, given actions can have an immediate impact on outcomes, but generally coaching will influence athletes in a *sedimentary* way (i.e., in the longer-term; Sayer, 2000), the use of more longitudinal data collection is needed to account for this. Making use of more sophisticated methodologies would provide an added layer of understanding to research, which until now has widely considered relationships between coaching practice and outcomes to be simple, unidirectional and homogeneous.

Table 1.3 – Research method adopted within studies.

Research method	Number of studies
Questionnaire	167
Independent-rater observation	1
Observation	18
State space grid	1
Physiological measures	5
Coach ratings	2
Interview	28
Field notes	1
Competition performance data	13
Focus group	3
Narrative ethnography	2
Autoethnography	3
Memory writing	1
Historiometric analysis	1

Psychological tasks	1
Literary resource analysis	1
Drawing exercise & photography	1
Total	249

The total equals 249 because some studies adopted more than one research method.

Addressing some of the issues identified, Mouchet et al. (2014) utilised a complex interwoven methodology of pre-match interviews, observation (through video and audio recording), analysis of behaviour and communication, and further psycho-phenomenological post-match interviews. This more sophisticated bricolage of methods allowed interpretations to be developed about what the coach intended to do, what they actually did in their practice and how athletes performed after observed practice. In addition, the coach provided retrospective reflections about their actions. While this paper is a good example of how multiple methods can permit us a deeper exploration of the impact of coaching practice, many findings were presented tentatively. This may be because athletes were not consulted, to understand their perceptions of the impact of the practice. Without this insight, it was assumed that the outcomes of athletes were related to coaching practice in a constant conjunctive manner (i.e., because the coach had delivered a message and athletes were observed changing their behaviour, the practice was deemed to have influenced the change).

In order to address general limitations associated with previous research, two approaches are proposed below which build upon the small proportion of literature considering relationships between coaching practice and athlete outcomes to be idiosyncratic and individualistic. Aligning with a more critical research philosophy, empirical studies should look to understand *how*, *when*, *why,* and *under which circumstances* coaching practice is related to athlete outcomes (or not) in order to make better informed recommendations for situated coach education. In line with North's (2017) suggestion, this could be achieved using participant observation, as well as other rich intensive methods (e.g., interviews, focus groups, stimulated recall, field notes). CR would be well positioned to use these methods in order to generate causal explanatory understanding, advancing knowledge further than simple inference that coaching practice is related to athlete outcomes.

Specifically, critical realist logic to unearth the interdependent mechanisms which underpin coaching practice and its influence on athletes would help to extend beyond the level of the empirical (e.g., what can be observed and experienced; Bhaskar, 2015). Given these mechanisms include entities from multiple disciplines (e.g., biological, psychological and social; North, 2017), interdisciplinary research capable of explaining their emergent relations is important for the development of the field (North, 2017; Wiltshire, 2018).

Researchers who continue to conduct work according to positivist or interpretivist assumptions may also consider implications for their research based upon these findings. Scholars who continue to identify with the positivist paradigm could look to utilise experimental or randomised control trial studies (with sophisticated methods to capture outcomes) in order to explore the effectiveness of coaching interventions and understand which direction causally inferred relationships are operating, recognising their often limited external validity or generalisability (Black, 1996). Those researching from an interpretivist standpoint should aim to generate deeper and more comprehensive *in situ* meaning (e.g., ethnographies of practice incorporating multiple methods). Arguably, such work would help in contributing toward our (causal explanatory) understanding of sport coaching and its influence on athletes.

3.3.5 *Sports and perspectives*

Representative of wider coaching literature (Cope et al., 2016; Cushion & Jones, 2006; Partington & Cushion, 2013; Potrac, Jones, & Cushion, 2007), the most prevalent sport identified within articles pertaining to coaching practice and athlete outcomes was association football (soccer) (n = 91 studies). Other more popular sports within studies were basketball (n = 61 studies), swimming (n = 40 studies), volleyball (n = 38 studies), track and field (n = 31 studies), and tennis (n = 24 studies). In total, studies investigating the relationships between naturalistic coaching practice and athlete outcomes encompassed 72 different sports. It was not possible to synthesise the competitive level observed within studies, as there were too many derivatives and too wide a lexicon of terms to be able to interpret cross-continental equivalents. It is important that

research is conducted in a broader range of contexts given, for example, that preferences for coach behaviour have been found to differ between individual and team sport athletes (Baker, Yardley, & Côté, 2003). Indeed, situating research in a more diverse range of sporting contexts would also aid the dissemination and implementation of findings (Williams & Kendall, 2007), given that grounding in context is considered to be crucial in the understanding of causal theory according to CR (Sayer, 1992).

The participant perspectives reported in each study are shown in Table 1.4. Most studies considered the impact of coaching practice from a singular perspective (82.7%, n = 172), dominated by the athlete viewpoint. This finding is in contrast to the review conducted by Gilbert and Trudel (2004a), who found that coaches were the most prevalent participant group. Possible explanations for discrepancies between the present study and the work of Gilbert and Trudel (2004a) may be that the earlier review did not narrow the focus as much as the present study (to only include papers focused on coaching practice and athlete outcomes), but instead looked at any coaching science literature. Such a strong focus on athletes as participants within the present review may also be explanatory of the assumption that without the athlete viewpoint, it is not possible to assume that coaching practice has had an impact. For example, how do we know that athletes have not simply come up with an independent strategy, regardless of the coaching practice received? And, how do we know that the coaching practice has actually been received and interpreted by the athletes in the first place, unless we consult them?

Table 1.4 – Perspectives acknowledged within studies.

Perspective	Number of studies
Athletes	187
Coaches	33
Observers/independent raters	14
Researchers	13
National Governing Bodies	2
Sport Psychology Consultants	1
Total	250

The total equals 250 because some studies acknowledged more than one perspective.

The perspectives of other key stakeholders in the activity of coaching received comparatively less attention (e.g., national governing bodies and coaches themselves). Only 17.3% (n = 36) of studies considered more than one perspective. Of these papers, the most popular combinations of perspectives were those of the coach and athlete (n = 15, 7.2%), and of independent observers and athletes (n = 5, 2.4%). Future studies should aim to consult multiple perspectives in order to understand the influence of the coach in a more sophisticated manner (i.e., including the perception of the athlete, coach, researcher, and other relevant stakeholders). Aligned more closely to 360-degree feedback processes, this has been argued to be a superior approach to managing and evaluating coaching practice and relations to outcomes (O'Boyle, 2014). As Bhaskar (2015) posited, however, a central feature of CR is that claims to truth are resolved and compared through discussion and debate that seeks, on a rational basis, to identify those findings or beliefs that appear to be truthful. While acknowledging that human knowledge is socially produced, CR attempts to find the most pertinent and adequate causal explanation, avoiding the view that all beliefs are always of equal truth value (Clark et al., 2007). Therefore, depending upon the mode of reality being investigated, an inclusion of multiple perspectives when generating causal theory must be grounded in terms of *judgmental rationality* (i.e., evaluating whether theory can be justified on the basis of evidence available to us, and if it is capable of explaining phenomena better than competing theories; North, 2017). It is also important to consider the practical adequacy and application of findings to contexts studied, as well as how endurable the theory is.

3.3.6 *Coaching practice-athlete outcome relationships*

Hundreds of individual relationships between different elements of coaching practice and athlete outcomes were reported in retrieved studies. It is beyond the scope, and not the intention of this review, to synthesise the intricate relationships between every element of coaching practice and athlete outcome investigated to date, or to generate a generalisable list of 'effective' coaching practice. Instead, in the following section, I provide an overview of some of the more saturated

areas of research (in chronological order from more to less popular themes), with examples of studies to illustrate findings, in order to inform future research directions.

Athlete motivation, encompassing autonomy-supportive practice, controlling coaching or the motivational climate, has been the major focus of research to date. Typically, studies have promoted the use of autonomy-supportive practice (i.e., permitting athlete choice, empowerment and allowing learning to take place from mistakes independently), and advised against controlling forms of coaching, in order to satisfy athletes' basic psychological needs and instil more self-determined forms of motivation (Almagro, Sáenz-López, Moreno-Murcia, & Spray, 2015; Amorose & Anderson-Butcher, 2015; Hein & Jõesaar, 2015; Pope & Wilson, 2012; Reynolds & McDonough, 2015; Sheldon & Watson, 2011). These findings are consistent with Vella and Perlman's (2014) review of common approaches to coaching which presents a similar relationship between autonomy-support, basic psychological needs and intrinsic or autonomous motivation. A proportionately small number of studies in the present review reported conflicting findings, however. For example, Smith et al. (2016) noted a negative relationship between coach perceived dimensions of autonomy support and athletes' autonomous motivation, which was attributed to a possible misjudgement of the environment that coaches presumed they created. Studies interested in the motivational climate shaped by coaches have also generally promoted task-oriented environments rather than ego-oriented environments (Reinboth & Duda, 2006; Smith et al., 2016). Coaching practice aligned with autonomy support and task mastery (e.g., creating a task-oriented environment) has been broadly related to fostering outcomes of increased well-being (Draugelis, Martin, & Garn, 2014), vitality (Reinboth & Duda, 2006), enjoyment (Van de Pol, Kavussanu, & Ring, 2012), and sport persistence (Rottensteiner, Konttinen, & Laakso, 2015).

Relationships between coach behaviour and team cohesion were another area of repeated attention, often using the Leadership Scale for Sport and Group Environment Questionnaire (e.g., Gardner, Shields, Bredemeier, & Bostrom, 1996). There are again equivocal findings associated with different contexts, suggesting that varying types of coach behaviour can promote or negate task and social cohesion of teams. However, research on this topic has widely linked greater team

cohesion (i.e., task and social cohesion) to high levels of training and instruction, democratic behaviour, social support and positive feedback, and low levels of autocratic behaviour used by coaches (in the eyes of athletes) (Gardner et al., 1996; Ramzaninezhad & Keshtan, 2009; Shields, Gardner, Bredemeier, & Bostro, 1997; Westre & Weiss, 1991; Yusof, Vasuthevan, & Shah, 2008).

A number of papers investigated the relationship between coaching practice and self-esteem, self-confidence or self-efficacy. Again, demonstrating the dominance of such topics within the literature, autonomy support and coach involvement were reported to predict self-esteem (e.g., Gagne, 2003), with this relationship often being mediated through athletes' feelings of competence (Coatsworth & Conroy, 2009). Change-oriented feedback quality and quantity were also found to be common predictors of self-esteem (e.g., Carpentier & Mageau, 2013). Further, White and Bennie (2015) linked enhanced self-efficacy to coaches' use of constructive feedback on skill technique in gymnasts. In contrast to these positive relationships, Nordin-Bates, Quested, Walker, and Redding (2012) found that fluctuations in the perceived motivational climate did not predict changes in self-esteem. In an earlier study, Reinboth and Duda (2004) reported that (self) perceptions of ability play a role in the relationship between motivational climate and self-esteem, however, which might help to explain this finding. Specifically, self-esteem was found to be lowest among athletes with a low perceived ability when encountering high ego-involving features, but high among athletes in a high task-involving environment, regardless of perceptions of ability.

A smaller number of papers investigated the relationship between aspects of coaching practice and athlete performance. Some of these papers have investigated the relationships between coach behaviour and performance in terms of competitive outcome/win percentage. Interestingly, Weiss and Friedrichs (1986) found higher frequencies of coach social support to be associated with a lower win/loss percentage and rewarding coach behaviour to be the best predictor of a positive win/loss percentage. This is in direct contrast with much literature focusing on coach behaviour and acute performance (e.g., coach ratings of performance, or performance data within matches or sessions, as opposed to match outcomes). For example, training and instruction, democratic behaviour, autocratic behaviour, social support, and rewarding behaviours of the coach have been

found to be predictive of coach ratings of player performance, both independently (i.e., when considered as individual standalone behaviours) and interactively (i.e., when multiple behaviors are combined; Garland & Barry, 1990). Use of more punitive coaching behaviours (e.g., scold or punishment) were generally related to decreases in athlete performance (e.g., Walters, Payne, Schluter, & Thomson, 2015).

Autonomy-support from the coach was again a predominant theme within the performance category, with studies suggesting that higher levels of autonomy-support promoted enhanced athlete performance, both in terms of match outcome (e.g., Cheon, Reeve, Lee, & Lee, 2015) and more acute measures (e.g., Gillet, Vallerand, Amoura, & Baldes, 2010; Pope & Wilson, 2015). A small pool of papers have, more recently, investigated the complex impact of coaching practice on immediate performance within sessions or matches. For instance, as earlier introduced, Mouchet et al. (2014) video recorded coaching practice and performance within a full rugby match, alongside semi-structured and explication interviews with coaches, to identify how the coaching practice and strategies delivered had an impact on the performance of athletes. Findings included the coach providing instruction to calm the players, and a subsequent observation of players controlling their emotions in response to hostile playing conditions.

Principally then, research within this review has focused heavily on the psychological/psychosocial domain, likely due to a reliance on quantitative methodology and the use of questionnaires, easily validated and deployed within multiple contexts. The large focus on and promotion of autonomy-supportive practice and empowering coaching has recently come under criticism from Denison, Mills, and Konoval (2017), due to its reductive assumptions about enhancing coach effectiveness. It is argued that many autonomy-supportive approaches are largely coaching 'rhetoric within a context that normalizes maximum coach control', due to the lack of consideration of the underpinning influence of power and disciplinary practices (Denison et al., 2017, p. 773). This reinforces the need for research focusing on the relationships between practice and outcomes to consider wider enmeshed socio-cultural, political, institutional, interpersonal and individual issues, in line with a multi-layered ontology (North, 2017).

As the result of research in this review suggesting such a vast spectrum of impact relating to differing types of coaching practice on athlete outcomes, confusion around the transference of recommendations to coaching practice can easily arise. As an example, Amorose and Nolan-Sellers (2016) found that when coaches ignored mistakes this was negatively related to athlete perceptions of competence. This highlights a somewhat contradictory finding in the sense that coaches are frequently encouraged to permit athletes to make their own mistakes and problem solve independently (i.e., be more autonomy-supportive; Mageau & Vallerand, 2003), to enhance competence. Based on such findings, practitioners may be confused about when they should intervene to avoid potential decreases to perceptions of competence, and when they should allow athletes to regulate their own learning to enhance perceptions of competence. Given the equivocal nature of research findings here, and the technocratic rationality characteristic of much coach education (Piggott, 2012), it is of little surprise that coach development initiatives have been poorly informed by the current literature base (Vella & Perlman, 2014).

This review has highlighted that relationships between practice and outcomes are, at present, often represented as a dyadic, unidimensional and homogeneous affair, as if practice is only capable of having an impact on athletes it is directed towards, and that it will likely have a stable effect if repeated. A critical realist approach to future research could consider *what* works for *whom*, *when*, *why*, and *under which circumstances*, within a given context. Focus should be given to the causal mechanisms underlying naturalistic practice and its influence, as opposed to uncritically viewing successful outcomes (e.g., positive performance) as being definitively the result of effective coaching practice. Enhancing the sophistication of research in these ways would permit more critical interrogation of *how* and *why* coaching practice is influential (or not) at different times and in different situations. Indeed, work of this nature would also help to explore both the intended and unintended consequences of coaching practice.

Such divergence in the influence of coaching practice, is consistent with, and can be captured by emergentism, as proposed by CR (Elder-Vass, 2010). Instead of simply viewing or portraying athlete outcomes as the *result of* coaching practice, a critical realist approach to future

research would view athlete outcomes as being multiply determined (i.e., able to be *shaped* but not fully *determined* by coaching practice). For example, CR work would explore *interactions* between the parts of entities and mechanisms (e.g., how entities – coaches, athletes, social structures and opposition performance – interact with one another, and how this can play a role in *shaping* specific events, behaviours or actions). The potential for mechanisms to be 'continuously active, due to their enduring properties and powers, despite their outcomes displaying variability in open systems', should be recognised (Scambler, 2012, p. 132). In critical realist terms, mechanisms can be said to be relatively enduring or *transfactual* (Bhaskar, 1975). Further, the powers of mechanisms may exist unrealised (i.e., not causally influence), or be exercised unrealised (e.g., be present but go unnoticed; Archer, 1998). Drawing attention to and apprehending the complex nature of coaching practice and its (non)influence in this way could help practitioners to more humbly and accurately anticipate, understand and reflect upon the influence of their actions.

Critical realist research could support the generation of emergent representations of coaching by acknowledging a multi-layered, laminated ontology of sport coaching (North, 2017). Through using intensive methodology alongside retroductive and retrodictive analysis, understandings of the causal mechanisms which underpin the influence of coaching practice could be achieved. Following such frameworks to research would provide more authentic, relevant and critical perspectives for coaches and coach educators, as opposed to the current diet of largely simplistic, standardised, technocratic content (Townsend & Cushion, 2017). The identification of causal mechanisms, through methodological approaches described above would also begin to bring research closer to the 'coalface' of coaching practice, helping to narrow the perceived 'theory-practice gap' (Bush, Silk, Andrews, & Lauder, 2013; Lyle, 2018).

3.3.7 *Peripheral excluded papers*

Many papers fell just outside of the inclusion criteria. It is the intention of the following section to describe the nature of such papers in order to provide a scope of the wider literature within this area. Primarily, papers were excluded because they were non-naturalistic; in many

studies the researcher had manipulated the coaching practice carried out to observe the subsequent impact on the athlete outcomes of interest (e.g., Hodges & Lee, 1999; More & Franks, 1996). Such approaches negate wide calls within coaching literature for academics to 'better illustrate the coaching process in terms of remaining true to its dynamic, complex, messy reality' (Cushion et al., 2006, p. 84).

A large number of papers, which examined the impact of small-sided games were excluded. Typically, these studies did not involve the coach, and the researcher constrained the small-sided game conditions to assess the impact on physiological or technical outcomes (e.g., Bennett et al., 2016; Torres-Ronda et al., 2015; Travassos, Vilar, Araújo, & McGarry, 2014). Where studies did involve coaches, the researcher generally constrained the manner in which they could operate (i.e., no feedback or encouragement was permitted) in order to avoid confounding the results (e.g., Silva et al., 2014). Here, the impact of naturally occurring coaching practice should be the focus of empirical research, not a feature that is controlled so as to mitigate its extraneous impact on data collected. Only then would studies be able to provide more evidence looking closely at the impact of coaching, as opposed to purely the impact of session design, which is rarely delivered in isolation from coach behaviour.

Many qualitative papers did not provide an empirical link explaining how coaching practice was related to athlete outcomes. Studies instead often investigated, in isolation, perceptions of coaching practice (in some cases simply assuming this to be effective in producing outcomes; e.g., Bengoechea, Strean, & Williams, 2004), or outcomes which were perceived to be desirable (without considering how these were actually connected to coaching practice; e.g., Romand & Pantaléon, 2007). Although these provide useful insights into what practitioners intended to do, or which outcomes they intended to foster, these research approaches ignored the mechanisms through which outcomes were actually shaped by coaching practice.

3.3.8 *Limitations*

The scope, and scale of this review presented many challenges. In order to identify a wide range of coaching practice and athlete outcomes, within a multitude of research designs, the search strategy and protocol were intentionally left relatively open. Included studies reported a wide range of disciplinary approaches and variables, with varying lexicons adopted, making the review of some data incredibly complex. Research working towards more universal terms would aid understanding and comparison of research in this field. While it is plausible that articles suitable for inclusion were overlooked due to the sheer scale of the review, it is tenable to suggest that the included studies provide a representative base, to support the claims made.

3.4 Conclusion

The purpose of this focused review was to build upon Chapter 2 by using a systematic search protocol to provide a detailed overview of the *scale* upon which research focused on coach influence has engaged with different: (a) paradigms, (b) research designs/methodologies, (c) methods, (d) sports, (e) stakeholders included as participants (e.g., athletes, coaches, parents) and (f) variables (e.g., coach behaviour/athlete outcomes), and what the implications of this are. The analysis highlighted that research has largely operated within the confines of the psychological discipline through a positivistic lens, adopting single-method research approaches and consulting a singular perspective. Stemming from a fixation on correlational and cross-sectional research designs (often with regression analyses), researchers, and perhaps practitioners, have widely conceptualised relationships between coaching practice and athlete outcomes simplistically, as unidimensional, linear and homogeneous. In this sense, a critical realist critique has located the 'known unknowns'. In other words, this study has illuminated what we cannot currently understand through the adoption of predominant approaches to research in this area. Given the importance of coaches' self-awareness and reported struggles in accurately reflecting upon their coaching practice (Millar, Oldham, & Donovan, 2011), it is essential that future research aims to further coach knowledge and stimulate reflection in relation to *how*, *when*, *why*, and *under which circumstances* practice *influences* (or not) athlete outcomes (accounting for greater heterogeneity).

The lack of research addressing these questions perhaps helps to explain why, even with increased research attention in the field, there has been little apparent impact on coaching practice or coach education (Lyle & Cushion, 2010). Further work investigating these areas would help to address the need for a more clearly defined purpose and social function of the coach (Duffy et al., 2011). CR provides one avenue through which research could extend beyond *knowledge for understanding* in order to also pursue *causal explanatory knowledge*. Such knowledge is arguably well positioned to help practitioners in reflecting upon their own contextual circumstances, as part of research-informed training and education, in an attempt to emancipate their ability to positively influence athletes (Bhaskar, 2015). An increase in the number of studies conducted alone will not necessarily result in such desirable eventualities, however. Close attention must also be paid to the meta-theoretical, methodological and conceptual underpinnings of future work.

Accordingly, there is a distinct need for research to focus on the more holistic connections between the micro-, meso- and macro-structure of coaching practice, without treating athletes as a homogenous entity. In other words, research should acknowledge that experiences and outcomes of coaching will be nuanced and shaped by intricate networks of emergent (causal) relations and interactions, between higher- and lower-order ontological entities. Indeed, conducting the critiques within Chapters 2 and 3 stimulated an important question to be further considered: is the notion of 'outcomes' or 'outputs' of coaching suitable to explain the realities of how coaching works. As a result of reviewing the literature base, I suggest not. Coaching concerns a constant (emergent) interaction between structure, agency, and other entities (e.g., material things), whereby coaching practice and its *influence(s)* are temporally shaped by previous (inter)action, and shape subsequent (inter)action (Elder-Vass, 2010). Perhaps, then, a fruitful line of inquiry into the emergent, relational *influence* of coaching practice could build upon and extend a small pool of research which, rather than looking for snapshot 'outputs' of coaching (as seen in studies retrieved within the present review), has instead critically explored how coaches and athletes act in the light of social structure and their conscious capacity to act as agents, and of how this changes (or not; and

why) over time (e.g., Cushion & Jones, 2006; Cushion & Jones, 2014; Purdy, Potrac, & Jones, 2008).

Future research could benefit from using multiple methods and engaging a range of key stakeholders associated with the coaching context. A critical realist approach innervating deeper into causal explanatory accounts, identifying emergent entities, powers and mechanisms, would be well positioned to make inroads into developing our understanding of the *influence* of coaching practice. More specifically, this would help to conceptualise the influence of practice in a more detailed, clear and accurate representation, thus increasing the potential to strike a chord with practitioners (Gould, 2016). For example, more relatable and situated idiosyncratic evidence may be able to better inform coach education and the coach's ability to positively influence athletes and others.

3.5 Remaining Research Problem

It is perhaps surprising that, to now, this thesis has highlighted that researchers, coaching practitioners, and other stakeholders lack evidence-based knowledge to work with relating to what is arguably the *raison d'être* of our discipline. That is to say, we currently lack sufficiently detailed, complex empirical and theoretical understanding of *how*, *when*, *why*, and *under which circumstances* our behaviours or actions as coaches influence (or do not influence) others. Both the broad literature review (Chapter 2) and more focused systematic review (Chapter 3) have together highlighted that the largest proportion of studies investigating the influence of coaching practice on athletes have been underpinned by positivist logic. These studies have typically been approached using cross-sectional or correlational research designs and have highlighted relationships between coaching practice and athlete 'outcomes' or 'outputs' in a simplistic fashion. Figures 1.2 and 1.3 provide a crude depiction of much of the literature in this area to date, and a potential way for research to address remaining questions, respectively.

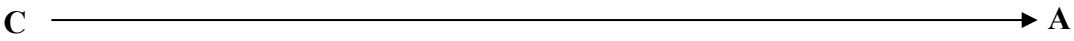


Figure 1.2 *A simplified heuristic of previous literature focusing on the influence of the coach*

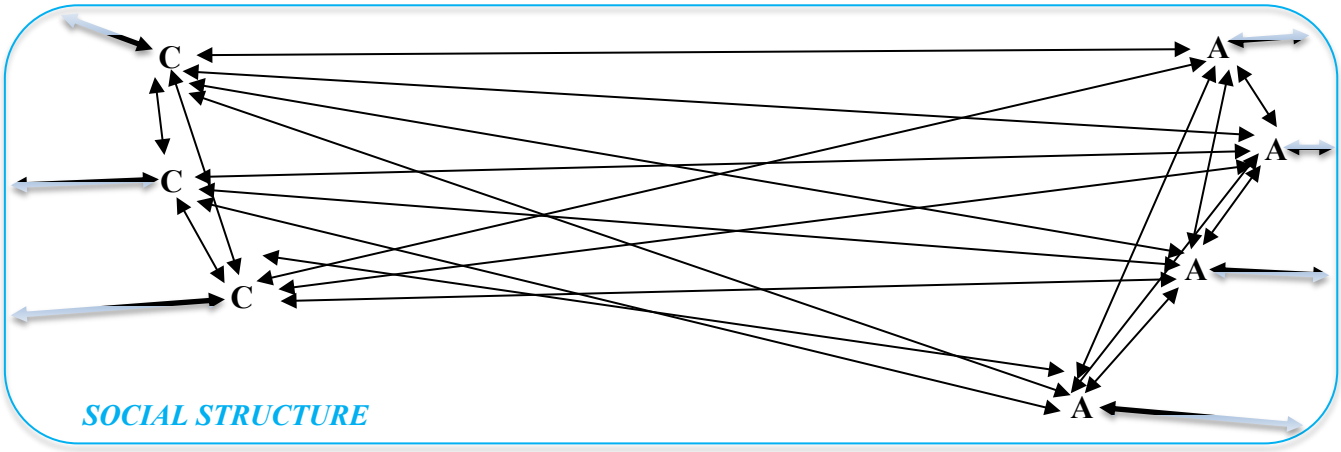


Figure 1.3 *Toward a more sophisticated understanding of coach influence*

Figure 1.2 portrays the reductionist perspective taken by many studies, whereby the coach (C) is viewed as a lone agent who delivers behaviours in isolation *to* and has a direct influence *on* athletes. In contrast, Figure 1.3 suggests that research could consider coach influence as a relational endeavour, whereby both coach (C) and athlete (A) (inter)action can shape and be shaped by multiple interactions with others.

Although the paradigms of interpretivism, poststructuralism and critical realism have provided us with more nuanced understandings of the influence of coaching practice, heading in this more sophisticated direction, research has typically been designed to focus on the coach, or to generate implications for coaches. Perhaps some of the difficulty or indeterminacy facing such studies in identifying how coaching practice has (or has not) influenced athletes can be attributed to the fact that performance is a multiply determined act. As Lyle and Cushion (2017) identify:

> 'Performance increments and outcomes are dependent on many factors, and coaches and athletes alike acknowledge that they are often subject to factors outside of their control (despite the fact that some sports are perhaps more dependent on repeatable techniques and physical capacity than others). Another way to express this is to

> recognise that sport coaching has no 'theory' that directly predicts the performance effect of coaching (expectancy modelling)' (p. 33).

Indeed, part of the multiply determined nature of influence can be explained by the agency that athletes retain to consciously reflect and shape their own actions (which has received little consideration to date).

Reinforcing points made through the review of literature in Chapter 2, this chapter's systematic review also points to gaps evident in the literature base surrounding the influence of coaching practice. Specifically, there is a dearth of work which attempts to identify the *mechanisms* through which coaching practice influences others (e.g., athletes) or not. Here, recognition of what social structure *is* (i.e., its ontology) and how coaches/athletes' actions can both shape and be shaped by social structure alongside their capacity for agency is sparse. Indeed, ambiguity in the use of the term social structure has long been recognised as problematic (Hays, 1994). Further, perhaps relatedly, there is a tendency for research to focus on the *what* of influence (i.e., what elements of coaching practice influence), as opposed to the *how*, *when*, *why*, or *under which circumstances* coaching practice influences (or not) others. Even more sophisticated research (highlighted in section 2.3) which has attempted to move beyond the *what* has maintained a strong focus on the implications of influence for coach-athlete relationship maintenance or breakdown, and rarely focused on the influence of coaching practice on broader actions or behaviours (e.g., the role performance of others).

Many accounts also disregard the temporal nature of influence or the perspective of multiple stakeholders (i.e., on the same event). Few studies have incorporated the (qualitative in-depth) relational perspective of the athlete or considered how both coaches *and* athletes contribute to (co-produce) the complex process of influence. The limited number of studies which have attempted to understand athletes' roles in managing the complexities of coaching (e.g., Purdy, et al., 2009; Purdy et al., 2008; Purdy & Jones, 2011) have provided an important line of inquiry to support the education and development of both coaches and athletes, as well as other stakeholders of coaching. Although these studies acknowledge the role of structural influences and agency, again, few have sought to explicitly understand *how* it is possible that both structural influences

(i.e., habitus) *and* agential reflexivity together may co-determine the actions of athletes. More work is required here which recognises temporally emergent, face-to-face (inter)actions in everyday practice. Building upon limited research (e.g., Cushion & Jones, 2006), which recognises the capacity of athletes to simultaneously conform with and resist coaching practice, greater attention is needed to understand how and why athletes simultaneously conform with or resist attempts to influence made by *multiple* coaches. Indeed, very little work has considered examples of coaching practice which have been *non*influential. Specifically, accounts of this nature relating to the manifestation and enactment of athlete performance are scant.

The purpose of this thesis, therefore, is to more closely examine how stakeholders (e.g., athletes) themselves receive, interpret, and are influenced by coaching practice (or not). Specifically, the work seeks an understanding of coaches' engagement in practice, and *how*, *when*, *why* and *under which circumstances* such practice influences (or does not influence) others (e.g., athletes), inclusive of what the explanatory mechanism behind this process may be. As will be discussed at greater length in Chapter 4, orchestration (Jones & Wallace, 2005, 2006) provides a valuable lens to understand coaches' and athletes' attempts to influence by managing pathos (i.e., aiming to close the distance between goals set and the actual ability to achieve these goals in practice). However, orchestration alone cannot explain the mechanisms through which attempts to influence the (normative) behaviour of others are indeed influential or not. Here, Elder-Vass' (2007, 2012a, 2012a) theories of emergentism, norm circles and the causal power of social structures, when fused with the orchestration metaphor, hold strong potential to address this very question, and therefore, to understand the (non)influence of coach interaction. Importantly, these positions permit an understanding of how athletes' (inter)actions are causally influenced by social structure *and* conscious reflexivity. As Elder-Vass (2007b) posited:

> most of our actions are co-determined by *both* our habitus and our reflexive deliberations, and that despite the apparently conflicting implications of these two perspectives for our sense of our ability to choose our actions, they in fact represent two complementary moments of one and the same process (p. 335).

Helping coaches (and other stakeholders) to appreciate the complexity associated with the (non)influence of their (inter)actions holds strong potential to develop sociological literacy (Lemert, 1997). For instance, drawing upon this analysis, coaches, coach educators, spectators (e.g., parents) and athletes may be able to more closely appreciate the often-subtle influence had by coaches (alongside other entities) in shaping the behaviours or responses of athletes, and the mechanisms through which this occurs. Portraying the influence of coaching in this way – less romantically; more authentically – is envisioned to help stakeholders of coaching to more realistically appreciate the coach's role in contributing to the actions (i.e., performance) of those within their relational networks (Collinson et al., 2018). In the following section, I introduce the specific philosophical (critical realist) position, which is complementary with this theory, before introducing the combined theoretical framework in greater detail.

Chapter 4: Critical realism and theory

'I believe it to be an essential (though not the only) part of the business of philosophy to act as the under-labourer, and occasionally as the mid-wife, of science'

(Bhaskar, 2008, p. 10)

4.1 Introduction

My journey to identify with the research philosophy of critical realism (CR) and its broad meta-theoretical assumptions have been laid out within Chapters 1 and 3 of this thesis, respectively. Given contemporary CR has become a diverse school of thought, however, the purpose of this chapter is to make clear the specific approach to CR that was taken in the completion of the present thesis. In particular, I unpick an *emergentist* ontology and epistemology of CR, and point to the compatibility of realist ontology with (moderate) social constructionism. An explication of how this position closely supports the theoretical framework, and, indeed, why the theoretical framework was selected is then introduced. Finally, the chapter concludes with an exploration of departure points of the selected approach from other areas of CR as well as implications for the methodological approach taken.

4.2 Ontology and epistemology

As introduced earlier, CR maintains both a realist ontology and a relativist epistemology. Such meta-theoretical assumptions resulted from a combination of Roy Bhaskar's works: *'A Realist Theory of Science'* (Bhaskar, 1975) and *'The Possibility of Naturalism'* (PN) (Bhaskar, 1998 [1979]). These early sources introduced transcendental realism and critical naturalism – theories critiquing positivist and hermeneutic logic, and particularly their application within the social sciences in Bhaskar's PN. Transcendental realism and critical naturalism were amalgamated to form 'critical realism' as it is now known – a contrasting and new position to that of positivist and idealist approaches which came before it. To recap, Bhaskar's basic argument in these texts was to 'revindicate' ontology; to insist that we must understand what the world and its objects (entities) *are like* in order to *know about* them (Bhaskar, 1975). In criticising the positivist Humean theories of causal laws and constant conjunctions of events, Bhaskar developed a laminated realist ontology; an ontology which consists of three layers – the *real*; the *actual*; and the *empirical*.

Things which exist (i.e., entities – objects and structures) and are real, causally interact at the layer of the *real* to produce events at the layer of the *actual*. We then observe and experience (the effects of) these events at the layer of the *empirical*. However, because events are often *multiply determined* by a number of interacting entities, we cannot derive knowledge about the causes of events simply from our observation or experiences of them.

Rejecting the Humean logic of causality that events which frequently precede another event indicate causation, Bhaskar posited that events were instead caused by the way in which objects and structures are related to, and interact with, one another to produce the event – this interaction between entities is known as the *mechanism* (Bhaskar, 1975). For example, when an athlete performs a skill this is an event which occurs at the level of the actual and can be observed by others (at the level of the empirical). It is multiply determined by a number of interacting causal entities (e.g., the influence of previous interactions with others through social structure, the decision making capacity of the athlete, conditions of the pitch, performance of the opposition) at the level of the real. We cannot directly observe these entities and the way in which they are related to one another (mechanisms) at the level of the empirical; we can only observe their effects. Indeed, it has been suggested that there will always be a 'conceptual gap' between the mechanisms created by researchers and the real mechanisms out there (Williams, 2018). The aim of science is to generate the most plausible understandings and explanations of mechanisms which must always be recognised as fallible. Closed systems in science rely on one (relatively) stable mechanism to produce an event (i.e., planetary movement). Conversely, open systems rely on multiple mechanisms with contingent relations. Importantly, within both open and closed systems individual entities may causally influence, or not causally influence (e.g., exist unrealised; Bhaskar, 1975).

Critical realism, then, views the molecular composition and structure of some aspects of the universe as predating and existing independently of humans. However, we as humans have the capacity to consciously think about, investigate and (socially) produce knowledge of and within this world (Bhaskar, 1975). This very property to consciously think is founded upon the interaction of real entities (e.g., physiological and biological structures and processes), and, as such, we have a

material base ourselves (Bhaskar, 1975). On this basis, then, Bhaskar recognised a need to consider more closely how such an ontological and epistemological position might fit within the social domain, and, specifically, what the social world must be like for us to have knowledge of it. As developed in PN (Bhaskar, 1998 [1979]), his thesis of *naturalism* achieved this very aim, contending that there could be an essential unity of method between the natural and social sciences. In this sense, logic applied to the natural world in the multiple determination of events was also viewed as being compatible in terms of its application to the social realm. In other words, real entities interact to produce social events, which may then be observed and experienced by us as agents (Bhaskar, 1998 [1979]). Before proceeding further with a discussion of CR to explain social phenomena here, there is a need to first demystify what critical realists mean when they use the term '*real'*.

Contrary to some beliefs that when realists refer to the 'real' they speak of things which purely exist independently to us as human beings, 'real' instead simply alludes to anything which is capable of producing a *causal* influence (Fleetwood, 2004). Entities which are real, then, can, but do not always exist independently of our capacity to know about and identify them. In fact, many entities which have a causal influence are constructed by us as humans (e.g., knowledge, language, discourse, symbols etc.). Indeed, we as human beings are real entities ourselves; we have the power to causally influence entities (e.g., social structure) in a critical realist ontology. Equally, this is not to say that everything is socially constructed by us either. Some entities do in fact exist independently from our identification of them (e.g., planetary movement, tidal surges, physiological processes). Social entities can also exist independently from our ability to identify them too (e.g., if we are out of earshot/visibility of a discussion and are not directly involved in it, this discussion still takes place: it is real).

Even in the social realm, the primacy of ontology, according to a CR perspective, implies that events (occurrences) are constituted by the interaction of real entities (things – e.g., human agents, communication, power relations) at a level which is not always directly observable to us as humans (Bhaskar, 1975). Our experiences of these events (at the level of the empirical) only

provide a fallible snapshot of the event. Experiences or observations do not provide us with an understanding of the full set of causal influences which have interacted to produce a social event. This conception, as above, again allows for ontological depth or stratification; what is capable of being known does not stop at our direct experience of events (Bhaskar, 1975). The unique dynamic to be observed in the social domain is that of the double hermeneutic; unlike the natural sciences whereby we typically observe a subject-object (or concept-thing) relationship, in the social sciences we also must observe a subject-subject (concept-concept) relationship whereby we *create* concepts (Bhaskar, 1998 [1979]). It is this concept-dependence of some entities within the social domain which opens up the potential for realist ontology to be compatible with some forms of social constructionism. Indeed, in this regard, many scholars have suggested that *weak* or *moderate* social constructionism is compatible with realist ontology (Berger & Luckmann, 1971 [1966]; Bhaskar, 1998 [1979]; Bourdieu, 2010; Elder-Vass, 2012a, 2012b; Fleetwood & Ackroyd, 2004; Joseph & Roberts, 2004; Mingers, 1999; Nightingale & Cromby, 1999; Nightingale & Cromby, 2002; Sayer, 2000; Searle, 1995; Sewell, 1992; Sismondo, 1996; Smith, 2010).

4.3 The compatibility of realist ontology and (moderate) social constructionism

Although there is a school of thought that realist ontology is not compatible with social constructionism, this has largely been explained through the attempted integration of *strong* constructionism (e.g., where *everything* is viewed as being socially constructed) with realist ontology (Gergen, 2001; Shotter, 1993). As Elder-Vass (2012a) has argued, I take the view that moderate social constructionism is indeed compatible with realist ontology, and, in order to adequately explain the social world we require both. Realist critiques of constructionism sometimes take the view that constructionists see everything as being socially constructed, and, in some cases, that nothing can exist outside of our minds. Paradoxically, then, even though they recognise the concept dependence (i.e., socially constructed element) of social reality, some realists throw out or reject the constructionist label on grounds of radical constructionism (Al-Amoudi & Willmott, 2011). Conversely, constructionist views of realist ontology sometimes take the view that everything that is real must exist completely independently to us as humans, and, as such, even

though they may acknowledge reality of the external world, some constructionists position themselves as antagonistic to realist logic (Smith, 2010). Both of these arguments take radical or extreme ontological and epistemological views of the target of their critique. In actual fact, few constructionists would deny that there are things that must be real and exist independently to us. Similarly, few realists would take the view that nothing can be socially constructed and that instead everything exists completely independently to us. This is where moderate social constructionism and realist ontology begin to become compatible, and, arguably, even *necessary* to explain our (social) world.

Social construction is 'a real process and a process whose products are real'; it is dependent upon us as humans and our emergent properties (from the relations between our material parts) which allow us to interact with, emergently create and be influenced by social entities (i.e., social structure) with causal powers themselves (Elder-Vass, 2012a, p. 7). Indeed, in Elder-Vass' argument 'the power to exert normative influence is attributed to real, material groups of people', but, the effectiveness of social structure 'depends fundamentally on the beliefs of individuals' (Elder-Vass, 2012a, p. 33). Further, these beliefs are generated through experiences of communicative interaction, and, should these interactions change, generating different beliefs, the normative environment would be constructed differently (Elder-Vass, 2012a). Here, the normative environment could have a different (real) causal influence on the actions of individuals. Hence, (moderate) social constructionism is indeed compatible with a realist ontology. In light of entities (or things – e.g., people) being capable of causally interacting with other entities (e.g., social structure) to produce social events in this manner, there is a need to more closely understand how the interaction of these entities is viewed within CR. In fact, it is this *emergentist* concept of interaction, in line with a stratified ontology, that is arguably the *raison d'être* of the paradigm. While Bhaskar first introduced emergentism within his early works (Bhaskar, 1975, 1998 [1979]), Dave Elder-Vass has more recently taken this concept and applied it closely to develop a social ontology of normatively based phenomena, and in particular to: social structure; action; language, discourse, culture and knowledge (Elder-Vass, 2007b; Elder-Vass, 2010a, 2012a).

4.4 Emergentism and the multiple determination of events

Emergentism has long existed as a contested, yet important term within scientific work (Broad, 1925). Fundamentally, emergentism refers to the concept that a thing – often referred to as an 'entity' throughout this thesis – can have emergent properties (or powers) that are not possessed by its parts alone (Elder-Vass, 2005). Two of the most predominant and juxtaposed approaches to emergence are that of strong emergentism and relational emergentism (Elder-Vass, 2010a). Those defending a position of strong emergence (e.g., Broad, 1925) would argue that an entity or 'whole' can only be emergent if there is no way of explaining how it came to be, in light of relationships between its lower level parts and properties. For example, crudely, water is emergent because there is no way of explaining its properties from a knowledge of the properties of its constituent parts (i.e., hydrogen and oxygen) taken separately, or in their combinations with other constituent parts in a whole entity (Broad, 1925). Elder-Vass (2010a) provides a compelling critique of this stance, stating that the claim for strong emergence dissipates when a scientific explanation is found for a whole entity by describing the powers that the whole entity possesses as a result of its parts being organised (and related to one another) in a particular fashion. Indeed, one of the principal reasons that Elder-Vass' theorising was selected as a heuristic device within the present thesis was because his work is founded on the assumption that entities come about through causal *relations* between lower level entities, and that the 'whole' or higher level entity can also causally influence or act back upon its lower level parts – a perspective known as *relational emergence* (Elder-Vass, 2010a). Indeed, other approaches (e.g., actor-network theory; Latour, 2005) could have been selected. Although providing value in seeking out the ways in which actors are related, such an approach would not have permitted an understanding of how social structure could exist in light of these relations (i.e., how social structure is comprised of the interactions of agents), and how social structure could itself causally influence the actions of agents (Elder-Vass, 2008, 2015). Here, then, Elder-Vass' position allowed an understanding of both morphogenesis and morphostasis – how an entity comes into existence or changes, and how an entity maintains its parts in a particular set of relations, respectively (Archer, 1982). The remainder of this section now explores relational emergence and its implications for the present work in greater detail.

In understanding the interaction of entities and their causal influence we cannot simply view the whole as being the additive summation of its parts. Instead, the *way* in which entities interact (i.e., are related to one another) produces the emergent causal powers of that whole entity (to have a certain property – e.g., to act back upon and influence its parts), and as such this has implications for how we view the determination of events (Bhaskar, 1975; Elder-Vass, 2010a). This concept of *relational* emergence is central to CR, which alike Bhaskar's contention, assumes that the same logic of interaction is involved in the production of entities in both the natural and social sciences. For example, the way in which hydrogen and oxygen are related to each other in a specific form produces water. If this emergent relationship was different, water would not be produced as a 'whole' or higher level entity with its emergent properties (Elder-Vass, 2010a). Similarly, in the social sciences, the way in which employees interact, and are related (e.g., through power relations and ascribed roles), can form an emergent property of the organisation (e.g., an ability to shape the role behaviours of agents through norms, and thus the ability of the organisation to fulfil its purpose) as a whole (Elder-Vass, 2010a). Social entities are not wholly analogous with natural entities on this basis, however. There are subtle differences between the two domains. This can be best described through the *spatial disarticulation* of social entities.

Unlike natural entities, social entities are not always constrained by relatively stable boundaries. In other words, generally, entities studied in the natural sciences are dependent upon 'relatively fixed spatial relationships between their parts' (Elder-Vass, 2010a, p. 199). For instance, the physiological makeup of the body is founded on relatively stable dynamic relationships, with clear spatial boundaries between internal parts and the external environment. Conversely, social entities are not founded, or dependent upon such '*spatial fixity*' (Elder-Vass, 2010a). Social structures (e.g., organisations) depend upon the dispositions and beliefs of human agents (their parts) to produce the mechanisms that give the social structure its causal power. As such, they do not depend upon specific spatial physical relations between their parts: they can be *spatially disarticulated.* This opens up the possibility for people to exist within multiple social groups, and/or to influence and be influenced by these different social groups. For example, a spy may be

part of the social group of his or her employment organisation, part of a family, part of a sports organisation and indeed a part of many other social systems. Alternatively, an individual may travel to different countries and be influenced by different cultures and norms. This brings complexity to the emergentist stance as it means that humans are capable of playing multiple roles at the same time and even in the same action (or that they are required to understand which role norm applies in which situation). Here, their actions are capable of being (normatively) influenced by a variety of different (and sometimes conflicting) social structures (Elder-Vass, 2010a). Before being able to describe how these social structures may influence the action of agents in greater detail, we must first explore possible explanations of how these entities came into existence.

Entities (and their properties) emergently interact to produce what can be considered 'whole' entities (existing at a higher level) (Elder-Vass, 2010a). These (whole) entities themselves have emergent properties in which their parts do not possess individually, and in which the whole entity itself would not possess in the absence of such a structuring set of relations between its parts (Elder-Vass, 2010a). Thus, entities can be viewed as being *laminated*; each entity is founded upon the relations of entities at a lower level, which can be stripped down to their lowest material bases. For instance, cultural norms are created by individuals and the way in which they interact with one another. The power of an individual to interact with others is dependent on their lower-level entities being structured into a particular set of relations (e.g., the interaction of a set of relations between cells and organs which allow agents to see and communicate for example). Cultural norms, through the influence of social structure (e.g., storing a disposition to act in a particular manner), can then causally influence the actions of individuals within society (Archer & Elder-Vass, 2012). Social structure would not have the power to causally influence action if its constituent parts were not arranged into such a specific set of relations. It is this theorisation of emergence, then, that permits both individual agents *and* social structure to be causally efficacious in their own right (Elder-Vass, 2012a). Structure and agency can thus be said to be analytically distinct from, but ontologically intertwined with one another (Gronn, 2000).

The interaction of agents (among other entities) and the way in which they are related creates the emergent property of social structure (i.e., norm circles which will be explored in greater depth later in this section). The 'whole' entity in this sense is the social structure. The social structure has emergent causal properties which its parts do not possess individually, and which it would not possess itself if it did not have the set of structuring relations between its parts (i.e., agents). Resultantly, social structure can causally influence the behaviour and action of individual agents (Elder-Vass, 2007b). This is known as 'downward causation' – higher level entities are also able to act back upon and causally influence their lower level parts (entities). Importantly, this causal influence of the higher level entity does not operate deterministically (i.e., wholly control the action of agents), however; action is also influenced by the capacity for agents to consciously think, deliberate and be reflexive (Elder-Vass, 2007b). In other words, events are *multiply determined* – they are not explained by single causal powers, but instead multiple interacting causal powers (Bhaskar, 1975). It is this very notion that forms the cornerstone of Elder-Vass' logic in his theorisations relating to: social structure (normative institutions), agency, action, discourse, language, culture, and knowledge. It is this very notion, then, that makes emergentism well positioned to contribute to the present research questions through permitting an explanation of how coach and athlete interaction can shape social structure, and how social structure (alongside the capacity for agents to make conscious decisions) can then causally influence the actions of others (i.e., athletes in their performances). Indeed, given that coaching is an inherently social domain replete with ambiguity (Jones & Wallace, 2005), the emergentist perspective allows a consideration of coach-athlete and coach-coach (inter)action which matches the realities of influence as an often subtle, heterogeneous act which is capable of producing unintended consequences.

4.5 Theoretical framework

In order to address the research questions (please see section 1.3), and in line with the emergentist ontology put forward, the present thesis adopted a theoretical framework capable of explaining how (inter)actions of athletes and other stakeholders both shaped and were causally shaped by social structure. In particular, the thesis draws upon and integrates the complementary

work of Elder-Vass (in his theorisation of the causal power of social structures – principally through norm circles and structure-agency relations; Elder-Vass, 2007, 2010, 2012a), and Jones and Wallace (in their theorisation of coaching as 'orchestration'; Jones & Wallace, 2005, 2006). For a full explanation of how, when and why the theory introduced in this section was (first) identified and applied to the research process, please refer to section 5.5. As has been introduced earlier (in section 2.3), and as will be explored in greater detail below, orchestration was selected as a theoretical framework for its propensity to study coaching as a more subtle, unobtrusive 'steering as opposed to controlling'; 'a dynamic interactive process involving much 'behind the scenes string pulling' towards desired objectives' (Jones et al., 2013, p. 272). Indeed, this was deemed to be a powerful position through which the 'messy realities' of coaching (Cassidy et al., 2004) could be better explored (Bjørndal & Ronglan, 2018). Rather than viewing coaches' practice as controlling the actions of others, orchestration usefully posits that coaches can never fully control the actions of others; coaches can only shape or partially influence the actions of others. Here, coaches are required to orchestrate in attempt to manage pathos (i.e., the distance between goals set and the actual ability to then achieve these goals) (Readdy et al., 2016).

Although valuably implying that the orchestrative actions of coaches should be viewed as inter-active acts, the definition of orchestration and its empirical application (e.g., Jones et al., 2013; Jones & Ronglan, 2018; Jones & Wallace, 2005; Santos et al., 2013) to date has been heavily coach-focused (i.e., centred on *what coaches do* and *how they do it* when they engage in orchestration). To the authors' knowledge, there is only one study (e.g., Raabe et al., 2017) at present which has focused on sources of pathos faced by athletes and strategies used by athletes to manage this pathos. Without greater focus on relational (coach and) athlete orchestration, we run the risk of viewing coaches and athletes as agents who stand apart and orchestrate in isolation from one another. Nonetheless, orchestration provides a valuable frame through which coaches' and athletes' *attempts to* influence (their own and others' goals/actions) can be understood. However, orchestration alone cannot explain, theorise or account for the *actual* influence of coaches' or athletes' (inter)actions. Further theory is required to understand how orchestrated coach and athlete

interaction can play a role in shaping and being shaped by the emergent property of social structures (e.g., how coaches' can act on behalf of specific social structures to make others aware that they face a normative pressure to act in a particular way or not, and how athletes then engage with such interaction to act in particular ways or not).

Without emergent normative theory to augment orchestration, we are left with portrayals of coach and athlete orchestration which cannot fully explain the actions of either party in relation to one another. We cannot fully theorise *how* or *why* coaches orchestrate by attempting to endorse particular normative standards, and *how*, *when*, *why* and *under which circumstances* this then actually influences the actions or behaviours of others (e.g., athletes) or not. Here, I suggest Elder-Vass' work is particularly pertinent to complement, extend and deepen the rigorous study of orchestration within coaching. Specifically, his emergentist theory of action and concept of norm circles provide tools to explore how the interactions of agents (i.e., coaches and athletes) both influence and are causally influenced by social structure (Kuusela, 2011). In other words, Elder-Vass' work provides the 'connective tissue' between structure and agency; it provides one possible explanation to theorise how the orchestrated actions of coaches (and others) contribute to social structure, and how this social structure can (among other entities) then influence the actions of agents or not. I now provide sufficient information behind these works to more closely examine their synergies, and to rationalise the methodological choices taken. Before doing so, it is worth noting here that a critical realist view is entirely compatible with the integration of theory in this way through its commitment to *theoretical pluralism*. 'Multiple theoretical lenses can be considered for what they tell us about the various and stratified influences that are affecting the things we observe' (O'Mahoney & Vincent, 2014, p. 18).

4.5.1 *Norm circles*

The theory of norm circles helps us to explain the tendency of human agents to follow somewhat standardised practices across a social group. Indeed, because social structure is a particularly poorly defined and polysemic term which lacks ontological rigour, the perennial problem of structure and agency remains in social sciences (Elder-Vass, 2010a). For example, a

lack of clarity exists concerning exactly what social structure *is* and *how it can influence* our behaviour as agents. In line with critical realist logic, a problem exists here in that previous work has often failed to fully understand what social structure 'must be like' before being able to 'know about it'. Here, Elder-Vass' theorising provides one possible solution to this subject of intense debate. Norm circles are the type of social structure that are responsible for normativity according to Elder-Vass (2010a). In short, a norm circle is a 'group of people who are committed to endorsing and enforcing a particular norm' (Elder-Vass, 2010a, p. 22). A norm is a belief or value which can be learned (consciously or unconsciously) through interactions with others and stored as a disposition (Elder-Vass, 2007b). Norm circles thus relate to one particular disposition or belief held (and often endorsed or enforced) by occupants of the norm circle. For example, a norm circle may, through its members, serve to endorse and enforce the norm of queueing (e.g., to board a plane or purchase goods). In line with a relational emergentist approach, the causal power of norm circles to influence action is dependent upon the interactions of and relations between humans to produce, endorse and enforce a norm, which (through storing the norm as a belief or disposition) serves to (downwardly) causally influence the behaviour and actions of agents alongside other entities.

As used by Elder-Vass (2010a), the queue situation presented above provides a useful example of a norm circle and its potential to influence. The way in which humans are related to one another in a queue (i.e., the way in which they physically stand in a queue and perhaps verbally communicate with one another) creates an emergent property of the group (to queue), which individual parts (humans) and the group itself would not possess if they were not arranged into this specific set of structural relations. Those within the norm circle (i.e., those who hold the belief that the norm is to queue) are likely to conform to the norm and join the back of the queue upon being presented with such a situation. They are said to be causally influenced by the norm circle (through interactions with members of the norm circle a belief or disposition to act in that way is stored). As will be discussed in greater detail later in this section, however, human behaviour is not wholly determined by normative structures; humans also have the capacity to consciously think, deliberate and be reflexive in their own right (Elder-Vass, 2007b; Elder-Vass, 2010a). As such, somebody

may decide to join the queue in the middle, or attempt to jump a space in the queue. Such an act would be likely to stimulate a response from others in the queue who hold the belief that the norm is to queue. These people could act to protect, endorse and enforce the norm (on behalf of the norm circle) by asking the person to join the back of the queue, by frowning, or by arguing with them, for example.

So far, this account is yet to fully explain *how* norm circles serve to causally influence the action of individuals. This is now addressed through introducing and explaining the boundaries of norm circles and different types of norm circle. Norm circles can be *proximal*, *imagined*, or *actual*. Proximal norm circles are the people in the actual presence of an individual who have served to endorse or enforce a norm (Elder-Vass, 2012a). However, individuals often perceive the extent of the norm circle (those who are likely to enact, enforce or endorse the norm) to constitute a wider range of people than just those whom they have come into direct contact with. This is known as the imagined norm circle. It is not imaginary in the sense that it is not real; what is imaginary is said to be the extent of how big the group may actually be (e.g., in supporting a particular political party an individual may have been proximally influenced by those in their immediate presence – family members, friends – and what they have witnessed on television, however, they perceive that the number of people who support the political party is larger than simply those in their immediate presence). The actual norm circle, then, is the whole set of people who tend to enforce and endorse a particular norm (Elder-Vass, 2012a). Clearly, determining the physical extent of this group would be very difficult to achieve. Hence, norm circles and their (imagined) scalability can thus causally influence the way in which we act (alongside our capacity to make conscious decisions). Norm circles make us aware that we face a systematic incentive to act in a particular way. Importantly, the norm itself is not the causal influence; instead it is the norm circle (through enactment, endorsement and enforcement of the norm storing a belief or disposition) that has the potential to causally influence behaviour (Elder-Vass, 2012a). In this regard,

> it is the proximal norm circle that causally influences an individual to adopt a norm in the first place; it is the imagined norm circle that determines when (i.e. in whose presence) the individual believes norm conformance will be enforced and this

> therefore influences *when* they are likely to conform to it; and it is the actual norm circle that determines when actual endorsing/enforcing behaviour is likely to occur (Elder-Vass, 2012a, p. 25).

A set of dispositions or beliefs are produced in individuals through norm circles, which do not *compel* agents to adopt the respective norm, but instead, generate a *tendency* to observe the respective norm (Elder-Vass, 2012a). In practice, the role of norm circles in influencing the likelihood of an agent to observe a norm (or not) often depends upon: (a) the extent and applicability of the norm circle, (b) the interaction of different dispositions (endorsed by different norm circles), and (c) a multitude of other entities (e.g., the presence of specific agents) within a specific set of contextual circumstances (Elder-Vass, 2012a).

The intersectionality of norm circles and the influence of multiple dispositions or entities provides us with the answer to how people can be part of more than one norm circle at the same time. Individuals can acquire multiple dispositions to observe numerous norms, however, the norm circles which endorse these norms do not necessarily need to be congruent with one another (Elder-Vass, 2010a). We can acquire norms about being polite from our family, for example, and norms about work rate from colleagues. Equally, it is possible that others endorse and observe the norm to work hard, but do not observe the norm to be polite. Where norm circles for some norms overlap (i.e., largely, groups endorsing or enforcing different norms have the same members) these can be identified as *norm set circles* (Elder-Vass, 2012a). 'However even where many norm circles are clustered in this way, individuals may be influenced by a number of such clusters. To the extent that this is true, individuals become sites of *normative intersectionality*' (Elder-Vass, 2012a, p. 28). Practically, the skilled performance of agents thus requires sophisticated practical consciousness of the extent, diversity and relevance of norm circles in an individuals' context (Elder-Vass, 2012a). Further, the differential influence of competing norms is often dependent upon the influence of power. Here, for example, agents may decide between conflicting normative pressures by enacting the norm endorsed by the person or group to which they afford more power (Elder-Vass, 2010a). Indeed, those who conform to and endorse norms do not necessarily even have to be committed to the morality or 'rightness' of those norms; they may micro-politically act for instrumental reasons

(Elder-Vass, 2012a). Resultantly, Elder-Vass (2012a) refers to Goffman's work on the presentation of self (Goffman, 1959), in proposing the altering of performances within front and back stage environments as an example of the operation of this micro-political literacy.

The theory of norm circles is capable of helping this research project to address its questions because it provides an opportunity to explain how the (inter)actions of coaches, among others, endorse or enforce particular norms (on behalf of the norm circle) and how this can store beliefs as dispositions within the neural networks of agents. This can then help to explain how and why athletes act in particular ways, either confirming to or deviating from the norm, accounting for the influence of norm circles *and* the conscious capacity of agents. Specifically, the intersectionality of norm circles allows an explanation of how athletes might be required to decide between competing norms. Consistent with the emergentist approach adopted, rather than viewing the influence of coaching as a dominating, powerful act, this theory helps to reflect the more multiply determined, complex nature of social interaction and influence. As should now be evident, events or actions, as described and explained within an emergentist (realist) position, are multiply determined and contingent; they rarely operate in consistent or law like manners (Bhaskar, 1998 [1979]). I now explore how this theory of norms may explain the actions of agents who operate within other types of social structure (i.e., organisations).

4.5.2 *Other types of (normative and non-normative) social groups*

As well as norm circles, Elder-Vass (2010a) also distinguishes two other types of social group: *interaction groups* and *associations*. Interaction groups constitute 'two or more people interact[ing] in a manner that is shaped by their conventional understandings of the situation and of the appropriate way to behave in situations of this type', which are relatively short-lived and with no necessary ongoing commitment of parties to one another (Elder-Vass, 2010a, p. 146). Associations, on the other hand, can be viewed as 'two or more people who have a continuing commitment to the group' which extends 'beyond the duration of a single interaction situation' (Elder-Vass, 2010a, p. 149).

Organisations, then, are types of *associations*, however, these associations are imbued with *specialised roles* (i.e., coaches and athletes, both with different roles) and *authority relations* between these roles. People are the parts in organisations and roles/interactions are the relations between them (Elder-Vass, 2010a). Roles or social positions fulfilled by individuals in an organisation often have implicit or explicit (and formal or informal) role descriptions which specify the norms concerning how an individual *should* act on behalf of the organisation. Such norms are also commonly defined, reproduced or transformed by the expectations that (other) members of the organisation have of their role fulfilment (Elder-Vass, 2010a). The causal power of organisations depends both on normative institutions and non-normative causal mechanisms:

> '[t]he way the members of the organisation interact is a product of their normative beliefs, and thus of the norm circles that produced them, but the coordinated interactions within the organisation itself produce a *further* and non-normative causal mechanism that gives the organisation its causal powers' (Elder-Vass, 2010a, p. 156).

In a sporting organisation, then, the way in which agents (i.e., coaches, athletes and others) interact is (partly) a product of their normative beliefs generated through interaction with norm circles, but the coordinated interactions within the team (e.g., how members of the organisation fulfil their roles *together*) give the organisation its causal powers (e.g., to win a match).

Role frames (i.e., bundles of norms) help to define the range of acceptable behaviour by agents and may provide guidance for expected levels of performance. Here, where norms are backed by a wider norm circle than just that of the specific organisation they can be said to be *general* norms. Where role norms are specific or specialised to a particular organisation, they are said to be *local* role norms (Elder-Vass, 2010a). Importantly, role frames also provide resources to those in the role and leave room for different ways of performing it (Elder-Vass, 2010a). This flexibility enhances the scope for individuals to have a notable impact, either positive or negative. This, coupled with the fact that members of an organisation can simultaneously be (and in most, if not all cases, are) members of other norm circles which influence their role, provides an avenue to explain the possibility for behaviour which diverges from more established organisational role norms (Elder-Vass, 2010a). In

order to more clearly explain the (inter)actions of agents within organisations and what might have shaped agents to act in specific ways, I now introduce theory considering the role of social structure alongside agency in greater detail.

4.5.3 *Relations between structure and agency*

While structure and agency have been alluded to throughout this chapter, more close attention is required to be paid to the influence of both structure *and* agency in determining action, in line with critical realist logic (Rees & Gatenby, 2014). In order to extend the explanation of *emergentism* and its emphasis within the present study, it is important to signify that the position adopted relating to structure-agency relations again draws heavily upon the work of Elder-Vass (2007b) in his reconciliation of the positions of Pierre Bourdieu and Margaret Archer. Specifically, this standpoint critiques both Bourdieu and Archer's approaches on their proposed interactions between structure and agency, before suggesting how they can be modified and integrated. While Bourdieu (1990) is viewed as downplaying the role of conscious deliberation, instead placing more emphasis on the role of social conditioning in determining actions, Archer (2003) is seen to place heavy focus on reflexive conscious deliberation and somewhat negate the influence of social structure on human action. Archer and Bourdieu are therefore in conflict at both an ontological and a theoretical level. At a level of ontology, the two positions disagree on the distinct existence of human causal powers and the way in which social structures are internalised (if indeed they are at all). Theoretically, Archer and Bourdieu are at conflict in their views of the degree to which conscious reflexive deliberation can explain action or modify dispositions. Elder-Vass (2007b) implies that the two theoretical positions presented can be reconciled through an emergentist lens, however.

Depending upon the reading of Bourdieu's presentation of internalisation (i.e., how we store our experiences), emergentism provides an ontological bridge between the two positions. If we read Bourdieu's internalisation metaphorically as opposed to literally:

> when we "internalize" [sic] something, our beliefs about the world are affected by our experience in such a way that we accept it as a fact. Thus, for example, we may internalize a sense of inferiority as a result of being persistently treated as though we

> are inferior by people around us. Metaphorically, we may say that we have internalized our inferiority but, literally, what we mean is that we have acquired the *belief* that we are inferior (Elder-Vass, 2007b, p. 334).

Hence beliefs are conceptualised as being affected by our experiences of social structure, and can also have an influence on our behaviour. These beliefs are seen as belonging to the agents who are inherently part of the social structure (Elder-Vass, 2007b). Secondly, at a theoretical level there is a need to recognise that some agential behaviour is more reflexively determined and other behaviour is determined to a greater degree by habitus (socially determined). Further, 'many and perhaps most of our actions are co-determined by both our habitus and our reflexive deliberations' (Elder-Vass, 2007b, p. 335).

In order to understand in more depth how the emergentist framework can conjoin the two perspectives, we require an understanding of mental states and how these are emergent from our neurological (physiological) base. Mental states (e.g., beliefs) have been stated as appearing at the level of neurons in the brain, which form networks of connections, with differing strengths (Fleetwood, 2008; Kaidesoja, 2013). Such connections are strengthened when we have experiences which confirm the mental state, or weakened when we have experiences that undermine the mental state (Elder-Vass, 2007b). Mental states are 'thus emergent properties of neural networks, and can therefore be causally effective' (Elder-Vass, 2007b, p. 337), which provides us with a basis to understand how habitus can unconsciously influence action, alongside more conscious factors (habitus – beliefs or dispositions – are formed and unconsciously drawn upon through mental states stored within connections of neurons and can thus be utilised as a schematic source).

Elder-Vass (2007b) then draws upon the work of Davidson (2001) in locating the contribution of mental states to the determination of human action. It is argued that three 'reasons' can become causes of our actions: (a) a post-event description of beliefs surrounding the motivation for the action, (b) a conscious reason whereby conscious deliberation occurs underpinning an event, and (c) an unconscious reason whereby the reasons are implicit within neural structures. It is

postulated that a combination of (b) and (c) are required to fully conceptualise causal influences on human action, which clearly enlightens the possibility of connecting habitus and conscious reflexivity more closely (Elder-Vass, 2007b). As such, 'reasons co-determine our decisions, and decisions are stored in our brains as neural configurations – dispositions – which in turn co-determine our actions' (Elder-Vass, 2007b, p. 340). Moreover, as will be discussed later in section 5.4.3, (a) had important implications for the methodological approach advanced in the current study, in light of contextual constraints and the desire to maintain a naturalistic approach.

In order to consolidate, and make clear the theoretical position adopted, actions are viewed as being 'caused by the dispositions stored in our neural networks as a result of past decisions and experiences' (Elder-Vass, 2007b, p. 341), while the role allowed to decision making 'in amending this set of dispositions provides the mechanism by which the reflexive deliberation emphasized [sic] by Archer can enter into the same process of action determination as the habitus' (Elder-Vass, 2007b, p. 341). Consequently, this theoretical view is well placed to account for the capability of coaching practice to *influence* and play a role in shaping the behaviour of others in a variety of (often unintended) ways. For example, it is capable of understanding how (inter)actions or experiences with coaches and conscious deliberation of athletes are able to shape subsequent (inter)action. As Elder-Vass (2007b, p. 340) put it himself, there are:

> good reasons why there is no exceptionless empirical regularity connecting reasons and actions: like any other causal power, the causal powers of reasons to motivate actions are contingent on the operation of other causal powers with the capacity to co-determine our decisions and our subsequent behaviour.

Here, it is possible that performance can be guided not only through habitus arising from previous or current social fields, but also by new information which is utilised consciously (Elder-Vass, 2007b). Resultantly, this theory has real potential in explaining the influence of (ongoing) coaching practice on others (i.e., athletes), within a coherent picture of both structural and agential influences. From this emergentist position (e.g., the view that the whole is greater than simply the sum of its parts), there is a need to understand how and why

components of coaching practice interact together with other entities to influence others (e.g., athletes).

4.5.4 *Fusing Elder-Vass' work and orchestration*

What should now be apparent is that the position put forward here neither commits to determinism, or voluntarism; it allows a role for both structure and agency in influencing action. As such, this theory is highly compatible with the notion of orchestration as posited by Jones and Wallace (2005, 2006). Specifically, orchestration can be defined as:

> a coordinated activity within set parameters expressed by coaches to instigate, plan, organise, monitor and respond to evolving circumstances in order to bring about improvement in the individual and collective performance of those being coached (Jones & Wallace, 2005, p. 128).

As a metaphorical representation, orchestration implies that coaching is an activity which concerns 'steering' as opposed to exclusively controlling and thus being wholly responsible for the actions of others (Jones et al., 2013). Here, rather than coach behaviour directly determining athletes' actions, Elder-Vass' work is congruent with orchestration in that it is social structure – the norm circle – that is viewed as (casually) influencing action alongside the conscious reflexivity of agents. Though sets of relations (and interactions) between coaches and athletes, the norm circle has an emergent property to shape dispositions or beliefs in individuals (e.g., athletes) and thus shape the way that they act (alongside their capacity to consciously deliberate).

Orchestration was born from a dissatisfaction with previous rationalistic and simplistic representations of coaching which portrayed the activity as a linear mechanistic process (e.g., Christina & Corcos, 1988; Côté et al., 1995; Lyle, 2002; Martens, 1981, 1997; McConnell, 2000). Here, orchestration suggests that coaching is imbued with ambiguity and pathos. Ambiguity, in this sense, is characterised by coaches having limited control over the actions of their athletes, coaches' allegiances to conflicting beliefs, or the novelty presented to coaches by each coaching situation (Jones & Wallace, 2005). Pathos, meanwhile, is understood as a gap between goals which have been set and the actual ability to then achieve

these goals in practice (Jones & Wallace, 2006). Coaches *orchestrate* by implementing strategies in attempt to manage pathos and reduce the distance between goals set and the actual ability to achieve them. Elder-Vass' work provides an excellent opportunity to augment orchestration here by understanding potential (normative) strategies employed by coaches to manage pathos. Indeed, a key source of uncertainty for coaches is produced by the fact that it is always possible that role incumbents (e.g., athletes) might not perform in desired ways (to increase the likelihood of the team performing well). In order to work with or manage this pathos, coaches may therefore act on behalf of the organisation/norm circle to endorse or enforce specific (role) norms. They may do so in attempt make athletes aware that they face a systematic incentive to act in particular ways which are anticipated to make the achievement of the organisation's goals (e.g., for successful team performance) more likely (Elder-Vass, 2010a). As Elder-Vass writes:

> When individuals become parts of organisations, they do not lose the powers they have as individuals, but those powers are channelled and constrained as a result of the relations those individuals now have with others in the organisation (Elder-Vass, 2010a, p. 159).

The emergentist theory of action, then, also provides a means through which we can understand the *actual* influence of such orchestrated coaching (inter)actions. For example, we can attempt to explain the actions of others (e.g., athletes) in light of dispositions (stored through interactions with norm circles) and the capacity for the stakeholder to consciously reflect before acting (Elder-Vass, 2012a). As such, the theoretical framework holds strong potential to address the research questions of this thesis (please see section 1.3).

As highlighted in greater depth within Chapter Two, Jones et al. (2013) aimed to develop the notion of orchestration by incorporating work from organisation theory and educational change. Principally, this was achieved through integrating the core tenets of social irony, micro-political literacy, and noticing. More closely, this work contended that coaching is 'imbued with elements of uncertainty, ambiguity and, irony'. In this sense, 'uncertainty cannot be 'solved'; the problem is one of living with it' (Jones et al., 2013, p. 273). Coaching was also posited as a micro-political endeavour, which could be defined as

the use of power by groups or individuals who are constrained by structures and resources to achieve desired ends (Blase, 1991). Here, we begin to see the compatibility of language used in describing the ability of individuals to influence social structure, and also the ability for social structure to influence individuals – albeit, CR would call this a *causal* power. The basis of orchestration was also suggested to be the act of 'noticing': noticing opportunities to act appropriately (Mason, 2002). This is again compatible with the theory of norm circles, as we must notice the interactions of others before being able to (store or shape a belief or disposition and) act in a manner which is influenced by these interactions. In other words, we must be 'able to see or notice opportunities to act in the first place' (Jones et al., 2013, p. 276).

Closely observing the idea that coaches do not operate with unfettered freedom, but instead act within a set of complex structural constraints which must be navigated, Elder-Vass' emergentist approach, I argue, marries with orchestration particularly well. For example, the emergentist theory of action recognises that agents (e.g., coaches and athletes) do not act using complete free agency; actions are also shaped by (normative) expectations, beliefs or dispositions which are often required to be negotiated or navigated. These beliefs or dispositions can be shaped through interactions with norm circles which produce a tendency for agents to act in a particular way (e.g., to play with intensity). As such, and as introduced above, the emergentist theory of action has the potential to augment orchestration by extending accounts which explain how coaches act and perform their roles (orchestrate), to also understand *how*, *when*, *why* and *under which circumstances* these actions influence others (i.e., athletes) or not. In this regard, the way in which a sports organisation is able to perform can be viewed as being an emergent property of the way in which its parts (e.g., its athletes, coaches, wider staff and stakeholders, among other entities) collectively coordinate their interactions. In other words, the emergent property of the squad as a whole (e.g., to perform well or not) is one which does not reside in its individual parts, but instead in the set of relations between its parts to arrange it into the particular structure formed. The

organisation's emergent property to perform well can be said to be determined by both normative mechanisms (i.e., norm circles which define role norms) and non-normative mechanisms (i.e., the way in which those in these roles coordinate their interactions) (Elder-Vass, 2010a). In and of itself, this creates a further source of potential pathos or ambiguity for coaches and athletes. Here, although coaches and athletes can act on behalf of the organisation/norm circle to shape the normative expectations and pressures placed on role incumbents, if those within specific roles do not sufficiently coordinate their own actions with the actions of others, this may impact the potential for the organisation to achieve its goals (i.e., for the emergent properties of the organisation to be actualised).

Norm circles causally influence the action of agents within the group, but do not *compel* individuals to strictly act according to these norms. Instead, coaches and athletes have the capacity to consciously think and make decisions in co-determining their action alongside social structural influences. As such, this position is not only compatible with orchestration from the coach's point of view. It also provides an avenue to theorise and explain the actions of athletes, and how these actions may have been shaped by previous (inter)action with others (i.e., coaches) and conscious reflexivity. To date, only Raabe et al. (2017) have used orchestration to understand how athletes navigate pathos as an inherent feature of their own role (please see section 2.3). However, this work focused on broad themes of strategies employed by athletes to orchestrate (e.g., communicating with others, maintaining a positive attitude and developing relationships). Although useful, more nuanced and specific understandings of *what*, *how* and *why* athletes orchestrate within *situated* acts (in relation to others) is required to better understand the (non)influence of agents' (e.g., coaches' and athletes') interactions. Here, remaining true to the orchestration metaphor, athletes' actions could be better situated within both structural and agential influences, and complex power relations. Elder-Vass' work, then, presents an excellent opportunity to augment orchestration and understand how the (inter)actions of athletes are related to, shaped by and shape the (inter)actions of others. Thus, together, these theories again have

(further) potential to directly address the central questions of the present thesis (see section 1.3).

Compatibility between orchestration, emergentism and normative institutions (i.e., norm circles) can be further established on the grounds of *ambiguity*, *noticing* and *micro-political management*. It is the conscious reflexivity element of Elder-Vass' (2007) emergentist theory of action which helps to explain the capacity of agents (coaches, athletes etc.) to act micro-politically (i.e., to use power in attempt to achieve their desired ends). Because agents have a conscious capacity to influence their action up until the action implementation phase (i.e., carrying out an action) (Davidson, 2001), this opens up the possibility for choice in terms of conformity or non-conformity to the norm. In turn, such experiences and decisions are then stored within our habitus (they shape beliefs or dispositions). Micro-political action is not necessarily the result of unfettered agency, however. It is also the presence of normative institutions according to Elder-Vass (2010, 2012) which can influence our (*orchestrated*) actions (i.e., a process which both shapes, and is shaped by structural entities). For instance, we might learn to micro-politically act according to the norms of an organisation through observing the enactment and endorsement of a specific action by others. Adding further complexity here, Elder-Vass (2012a) argued that when individuals act there is no necessity that they are morally committed to the rightness of the norm; they may be acting in a specific manner for purely instrumental reasons.

The very concept of acting in a manner which is influenced by a norm circle rests upon individuals' capacities to *notice* the enactment or endorsement of norms by others to (store or shape dispositions or beliefs which) guide their action. Unlike Durkheim (1964 [1894]), who suggested that this noticing is done at a societal level (i.e., the content of our norms or culture can exist in a collective form of belief, which is external to individual consciousness), Elder-Vass (2012a, p. 44) instead suggested that:

> [o]nly individuals have the power to hold beliefs; only groups have the power to designate those beliefs as elements of shared culture. Culture is not simply belief, but socially endorsed belief, and that social endorsement can only be brought about by the group – a norm circle.

The influence of norm circles on us, then, is produced through our *individual* impression of a specific behaviour or action that we take to be endorsed by a norm circle that we are exposed to, and thus a disposition to (tend to) behave in that kind of way is created (Elder-Vass, 2012a). This is clearly dependent upon our ability to notice and recognise 'whether any action conforms to the understanding of the norm' and that these 'understandings of the norm are reasonably consistent with each other' (Elder-Vass, 2012a, p. 51). For example, agents may notice feedback and correction (i.e., sanctioning non-conformity and praising or endorsing conformity) delivered by other agents.

What is more, the emergentist theory of action appears to rest on the premise that there may be *ambiguity* in: (a) our reading of others' conformity to norms, (b) the intersectionality of (and sometimes conflict between) norms, and subsequently (c) our own implementation, enactment or endorsement of these norms. This is perhaps best captured by considering Elder-Vass' contentions that:

> cultures are composed of many cross-cutting norm circles, that different norm circles may have different social significance due to differences in the social standing, power, and resources of their members, and that culture is a locus of constant struggle over which norms people should observe (Elder-Vass, 2012, p. 46).

Indeed Jones and Wallace (2005, p. 127) agree in this regard: '[a]mbiguity also derives from the prevalence of differing and *contradictory beliefs* among individuals involved, generating divergence amongst the goals pursued'. Here, agents are often required to engage in conscious reflexivity to decide between norms in order to achieve skilled social performance. Ambiguity is also closely tied to Elder-Vass' work in the sense that, even when the norm circle strongly endorses or enforces a norm, there is no guarantee that role incumbents will act in alignment with the norm. Indeed, individuals have the conscious capacity to think and act in a manner which deviates from the role norm. In other words, the norm (circle) does not deterministically condition action (Elder-Vass, 2012a).

4.6 Bringing it together: How can these theories be compatible with both realist ontology and social constructionism?

After introducing Elder-Vass' and Jones and Wallace's theorising in the preceding sections, this section seeks to demonstrate how the theories can sit together within a stance enveloping both moderate social constructionism and realist ontology. In order to do so, I examine how the game of cricket and its laws can be viewed as being both socially constructed and capable of causally influencing the actions of agents (through norm circles). The game of cricket and its laws are created by us; cricket did not exist 'out there' waiting to be found by us as agents. Instead, we have created (socially constructed) the very meaning through which cricket has now come to be (collectively) understood. For instance, when the ball hits the stumps and the bails are dislodged from the top of the stumps, this is widely accepted as meaning that the batter is out. However, this acceptance rests on the collective endorsement and enforcement of such a norm by groups of people (i.e., a norm circle). Further, it requires individuals to observe and enact the associated consequences of the ball hitting the stumps (i.e., accepting that they are out by walking off the pitch). When actors observe the norm being followed by others – in this case, the batter leaving the crease, accepting that he or she is out, and walking back to the pavilion, as well as players from the opposition perhaps celebrating – this is stored as a disposition within their habitus (strengthening connections between neurons and synapses at a physiological level), and, as such, actors may internalise a *tendency* to comply with this norm. In this sense, it is not the norm itself which causally influences an actor to act in a particular way (i.e., to accept that they are out). It is the norm circle which has the (real) causal power to produce a *tendency* to act in a particular way (Elder-Vass, 2012a). In the example depicted here, the individuals who have acted in a manner which conforms to the norm (accepting that they are out when the ball hits the stumps and dislodges the bails), in the presence of the actor, can be said to be the *proximal* norm circle. It is not just the proximal norm circle which causally influences the disposition or tendency to act in this way, however. Agents will come to terms with the fact that there is a wider group of people who tend to accept that the ball hitting the stumps means that the batter is out (i.e., the wider cricketing fraternity). The *actual* norm circle in this sense can be said to be the whole sum of people who

come to understand this as the norm (e.g., every single person who tends to accept that the ball hitting the stumps means that the batter is out). Because identifying (and observing the actions of) this whole norm circle is unlikely, we can say that the actions of the agent have, instead, also been causally influenced (through their dispositions) by their *imagined* norm circle. This is not imagined in the sense that it does not actually exist, but instead, the *scale* or *extent* of the norm circle is imagined by the agent concerned (Elder-Vass, 2012a).

Importantly, dispositions do not completely determine behaviour, however; both dispositions/habitus *and* conscious reflexivity can influence behaviour or action (Elder-Vass, 2007b). For instance, regardless of the fact that a batter has a stored disposition that when the ball hits the stumps this means that they are out, they could consciously decide to deviate from this norm (i.e., refuse to leave the batting crease and deny that they are out). In doing so, they may well be acting micro-politically (Blase, 1991; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002b) in order to serve their own interests (e.g., to continue to score runs for their team). In other words, a degree of ambiguity (Jones & Wallace, 2005) is always evident in that the influence of normative institutions will not always necessarily result in action which conforms to a norm. There may also be ambiguity or pathos between the intentions of an agents' action, which seeks to endorse a particular norm, and the actual ability of this interaction to influence subsequent action in the intended direction. For example, athletes could misinterpret normative (inter)actions from others (e.g., by failing to recognise that the ball hitting the stumps means that the batter is out, and thus failing to walk off the pitch in this event). However, this would likely invite responses from others who serve to endorse or enforce the norm. Players or coaches might begin to orchestrate by challenging the batter as to why they are not leaving the crease. In doing so, their actions are likely to be micro-political in so far as they would be using power to achieve their desired ends (i.e., to ensure that the batter is out and knows that this is the case in future occurrences of the same event). Alternatively, the umpire, in acting on behalf of the governing body, may ask the batter to leave the crease, or produce a signal to reinforce the message that they are out (i.e., they cannot bat again). Moreover, a suspension could be handed out by the governing body for failing to comply with the laws of the

game. Irrespective of ambiguity present in the potential (mis)reading and enactment of normative environments then, there is generally sufficient information presented to agents for them to *tend to* internalise a disposition to conform to these norms (Elder-Vass, 2012a).

From the example presented, we can see that the game of cricket, and its laws, are both socially constructed (i.e., created in and through interaction by human agents) and can be explained through realist ontology (the power to exert causal influence lies with real, material groups of individuals; Elder-Vass, 2012). If beliefs and dispositions about the meaning of the ball hitting the stumps were to change (through the interaction and social construction of people), then this could causally influence action in a different way; the normative environment itself could be said to be constructed differently (Elder-Vass, 2010a). A pertinent example from cricket here rests with some forms of junior cricket accepting that a batter is indeed not out when the ball hits the stumps. They, instead, are able to continue to bat because they are still learning the game. This conception of the ball hitting the stumps, then, has been constructed differently. For it to operate in a purposeful and effective way, however, it is dependent upon norm circles and collective endorsement or enforcement of the norm, as identified in the example provided above.

4.7 Points of departure

To now, in critical realist terms, this section has introduced and primarily drawn upon Bhaskar's early work (Bhaskar, 1975, 1998 [1979]), which brought ontological realism, epistemic relativism, and specifically, the positions of ontological depth and emergence to the fore. The relevance of critical realism for the present thesis has then been deepened by incorporating the work of Elder-Vass. Alike Elder-Vass (2010a), I agree with Bhaskar on these above points, and see value in their implementation – hence their adoption within this thesis. Bhaskar's later work, however, took a turn toward dialectics and spirituality (or meta-reality) through his writings on the concept of explanatory critique which introduced the possibility of *ethical naturalism* and *moral realism* (Bhaskar, 1986, 1993, 1998 [1979]). It is this later work with which my thesis departs from Bhaskar's account. I, alike many critical realists (e.g., Dean, Joseph, & Norrie, 2005; Elder-Vass, 2010b; Hostettler & Norrie, 2003; Potter, 2006), doubt the need for a dialectical turn in critical

realism. I am sceptical that we can derive values from facts (ethical naturalism), or that moral values are objective, can be true or false, and are 'discovered' by us through this transition from fact to value (moral realism). On the basis that objective values (which are right or wrong) could not have preceded humans and their social interaction, this theory is rejected (Elder-Vass, 2010b). Instead, in line with the above presentation of norm circles, it is argued that moral values are created (socially constructed) through interaction between human agents and the causal power to influence behaviour (in line with a moral value) is dependent upon the emergent property of those who are part of a normative institution endorsing, enforcing, or enacting such moral norms (Elder-Vass, 2010b). Our understanding of the need to conform to these norms is stored within our neural networks as a disposition or belief based upon previous decisions, experiences and interactions. Thus, moral values are not objectively wrong or right before they come into our endorsement or enactment of them. Whether they are right or wrong is only objective in the sense that they are accepted, adopted and endorsed by other people (they are produced through our communicative interaction), and, as such, this process can be judgmentally rational (Elder-Vass, 2010b).

4.8 Implications for methodological approaches

The stratified and emergent ontology (advocated throughout this chapter) adopted in the present thesis had important implications for methodological choices in order to adequately address the research questions. Because the emergentist perspective suggests that social events are contingent and multiply determined, there was a need for sufficiently sophisticated methodology to match and investigate this complexity. Further, given social organisations are composed of people as their parts (with specialised roles and authority relations) who shape and are influenced by multiple norm circles (Elder-Vass, 2010a), there was a need for longitudinal inquiry to sufficiently capture the historicity, reproduction, transformation and influence of such entities and relations (Rees & Gatenby, 2014). Because action is determined by structural influences *and* conscious reflexivity, there was a need to engage with both agents' perspectives/descriptions and observation tools. As such, the logical choice was to utilise ethnography, and nested within this, a bricolage of methods to address the research questions. Such an approach is coherent with methodological

plurality as put forward by CR: the view that research problems should be addressed using a number of methods, but not concomitantly that 'anything goes' in the adoption and employment of methods. As Danermark et al. (1997) put forward, we cannot escape the 'ontological-methodological' link; the way in which we understand how something exists has important implications for the methods we use to investigate such phenomena, and consequently, the conclusions that we can draw from analysis according to such methods. For example, methodologically, we must avoid the attribution of causal power to rules or norms (e.g., as stated by an agent); it is not norms but the norm circles that endorse them that are causally efficacious (Elder-Vass, 2012a). Instead, we may 'observe patterns of interaction that effectively endorse and enforce this norm, and conclude that, whether wittingly or not, these individuals are indeed members of a norm circle for it' (Elder-Vass, 2012a, p. 53).

4.9 Conclusion

In this chapter I have introduced the core tenets of critical realism. Given critical realism is fast becoming a diverse school of thought, I have then provided an explicit explanation of the specific critical realist positon I adopted in undertaking the present thesis. Namely, I have discussed an emergentist ontology and how this (realist) ontology is compatible with moderate social constructionism. Subsequently, I have enlightened the reader in relation to the theoretical framework and how Elder-Vass' concepts of *norm circles*, *emergentism*, and *the causal power of social structures* (Elder-Vass, 2007, 2010a, 2012a) and Jones and Wallace's notion of *orchestration* are able to be fused to explore the influence of coaching practice on others (i.e., athletes). Indeed, empirical investigation utilising this framework holds strong potential to provide a novel contribution to knowledge by bringing more sophisticated explanations of *what*, *how*, *when*, *why* and *under which circumstances* coaches have (or have not) influenced others, which better resonates with the messy realities of coaching (Cassidy et al., 2004). Finally, in this section I have critically explored where and why my stance of critical realism differs to that of other scholars, before considering implications that the stance selected had for the methodological underpinning of the present thesis. In Chapter 5, I build upon the philosophical and theoretical

foundations which have been laid, by identifying the specific methodological bricolage adopted to address the research questions.

Chapter 5: Methodology

'research involves a wide range of methodological tools, and we have to use many of these tools in a concrete research project… However, we argue that this mix cannot be done without taking the ontological and epistemological dimensions into account'

(Danermark et al., 1997, pp. 1-2)

5.1 Introduction

Building from Chapter 4's overview of the philosophical and theoretical approach adopted in the present research study, the purpose of this chapter is to introduce and justify the methodological choices taken to investigate *what*, *how*, *when*, *why* and *under which circumstances* others' (e.g., athletes') actions were influenced (or not) by coaches. Specifically, I outline the process of ethnography, how I selected participants and how I both gained and maintained access to the context. I then consider my role within the research process and provide specific information on the context of the study and the participants. Next, I introduce the methodological bricolage adopted within the ethnography and discuss each individual method (i.e., semi-structured interviews, participant observation/field notes and stimulated recall interviews) in turn, before explaining the process of data analysis utilised to make sense of the data collected. Finally, I refer to, and critically explore, the potential for this analysis to be generalised as well as the tools through which quality and rigour of the work can be appraised.

5.2 Ethnography

The sociological practice of ethnography was selected within this research programme to deepen knowledge of how coaching practice was received, interpreted by, and influenced (or not) others. The term ethnography itself has been identified as participating:

> 'overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions through informal and formal interviews, collecting documents and artefacts – in fact, gathering whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the emerging focus of enquiry' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 3).

Indeed, such approaches have been positioned as a valuable methodology to provide rich description of social practice (Cushion, 2014). However, many ethnographies have looked only at

the subjective experiences of participants, or the researcher themselves (Rees & Gatenby, 2014). In contrast, the current research aimed to extend beyond this empirical level, to understand and *explain* the causal mechanisms which influenced observed (inter)actions and sense making (i.e., accessing the level of the real and the actual – see Chapter 4). In particular, for critical realist ethnography, getting inside the heads of participants or their subjective understandings is not enough; critical realists must aim to reveal connections between subjective understandings and layers of the context or social structure (Rees & Gatenby, 2014). In line with an emergentist approach, this allowed the research to focus on the in-situ (inter)actions of agents, and how these (inter)actions both shaped and were shaped by social structure. In doing so, a theorisation of the mechanisms through which coaching practice influenced (or not) others, which did not over emphasise the conscious capacity of the agent to control their actions, was able to be generated.

Mariampolski (1999) argued that ethnography affords researchers with an opportunity to study events as they naturally occur within their individual contexts, something that was pivotal for the design of the present study. As previously argued, the intention was to move away from non-naturalistic research which has manipulated coaching practice to observe its impact on athlete 'outcomes'. The influence of the coach in their everyday practice was the focus of inquiry in the present study, not something which was to be empirically controlled for. In this sense, ethnography, over other methodological approaches (i.e., cross-sectional studies) allowed the yielding of detailed in-situ information. Specifically, it enabled the research to develop an understanding of how behaviour both shaped and was shaped by social structure (alongside conscious reflexivity) over time. Further, ethnography provided a degree of temporal longevity and immersion into the field, which enabled key individuals of the context to be identified as well as an explanation of their roles, relations and (inter)actions (North, 2017). Remaining true to the ontological and epistemological commitments of the critical realist approach underpinning this thesis, the aim was to *explain* as opposed to merely describe phenomena. Indeed, the ethnographic

approach allowed the generation of rich data which made the *explanation* of coach (non)influence more likely.

5.2.1 *Sampling and choosing participants*

It has been suggested that the commonly applied verb to 'sample' is not the best term to describe the act of selecting participants in qualitative work (Emmel, 2013). 'Sampling' implies that the researcher draws a sample which is representative of a population of interest and that every individual within this population would have a chance of being included that is greater than zero. On the basis that qualitative sampling rarely operates on this basis, and instead involves *choosing* cases, Emmel (2013) put forward the case that 'choosing' may be a better term to use when referring to the selection of cases or individuals for qualitative research: '[t]he purpose of qualitative research is to interpret and explain the complex things that sustain cases. Choosing cases is a far better way to describe the way in which scientific realist qualitative research proceeds' (Emmel, 2013, p. 157). Nonetheless, it was recognised that because the term sampling is still used widely in qualitative realms, it would not feasible to suddenly banish this term from our methodological lexicon (Emmel, 2013). As such, both the terms 'sampling' and 'choosing' will be used throughout this section, however, importantly, when these terms are used, they refer to choosing in the qualitative sense and not random probability sampling.

In a similar vein to Emmel (2013), Kemper, Stringfield, and Teddlie (2003) distinguished between two primary modes of sampling within qualitative research – probability sampling or purposive (also referred to as purposeful) sampling. Probability sampling refers to the 'randomness' element of sampling, or approaches which take some of the 'choice' in sampling away from the researcher. Typically, random sampling is used where researchers aim to make statistical inferences or more objective generalisations to wider populations (Tracy, 2013). Purposive sampling, on the other hand, is concerned with ensuring that the population selected is capable of meeting the specific research goals, resources and timeline (Tracy, 2013). In this form of sampling the researcher has more scope to select relevant *information-rich* cases based upon their

expertise and judgement. This is viewed as a strength to enhance the potential for *depth* of analysis over breadth of coverage (Emmel, 2013).

Purposive sampling was, therefore, adopted within the present work, and, in particular, a blend of *realist sampling* and *opportunistic* or *emergent* sampling was used (Patton, 2015). Practically, this meant carefully considering which cases would be likely to provide relevant information to address the research questions, and what these cases must be like, while also considering the resources available to me as a researcher and the timescale presented (Kemper et al., 2003). *Realist* sampling in this regard was particularly useful. Sampling in a realist approach presupposes that researchers do not consider cases for their research from a 'clean slate' without any prior assumptions or ideas; they bring prejudgements, frames of reference, theories, concepts, and prejudices to their choices (Emmel, 2013). In line with Elder-Vass' (2010) contention that it is not just agency, but also social structures that can causally influence action, entities such as the institution we work for (and our relations with certain colleagues), funding bodies, and even the participants with whom we conduct research, can causally shape our ongoing decisions regarding the choice of cases. In this sense, reflecting back upon the structural entities which perhaps influenced my decisions in relation to sampling, throughout much of my undergraduate degree in sports science I was exposed to and experienced endorsement and enforcement (e.g., through assessment feedback) of the norm that random probability sampling and power calculations were the gold standard for research (Hopkins, Marshall, Batterham, & Hanin, 2009). When being intersected by other norm circles (i.e., when completing my undergraduate dissertation and commencing the Ph.D. programme of study), I was exposed to a new norm for sampling within qualitative research – that of purposive, and more specifically, realist sampling. Here, I reflexively made a conscious decision to make use of purposive sampling, which (alongside the causal influence of the norm circle – other individuals who endorsed similar practices for sampling) likely strengthened my beliefs or dispositions about the applicability of sampling methods for qualitative research.

In line with a critical realist ontology, the choosing of cases in a realist approach required me to understand what the research objects that I was interested in (i.e., the interaction and influence of coaches and others) must have been like before being able to have knowledge about them. Specifically, this was achieved through close examination of the extant literature and theory on sport coaching, critically considering its ontological and epistemological contributions (as outlined in Chapters 2 and 3) before then turning to the theoretical framework for initial (fallible) explanation. Resultantly, given sport coaching was unlikely to bring about influence through direct, homogeneous, or straightforward means, and that instead, its influence could be viewed as being multiply determined through a complex interplay of both structural and agential entities (Nichol, Hall, Vickery, & Hayes, 2019), this had important implications for my 'choosing' of cases. This was especially the case given that a realist research programme seeks to understand what works for whom, how, when, why, and under which circumstances (i.e., the view that the multiple determination of events is context-specific; Ackroyd & Karlsson, 2014). Therefore, in order to provide sufficient detail to explain both structural and agential entities, and how they influenced subsequent (inter)action within an emergent ontology, the decision was made to study one case (i.e., one coaching context), in depth.

Given I was already coaching within a representative-level performance pathway programme, this provided an *opportunistic* avenue for recruitment. As Tracy (2013, p. 135) asserted: '[g]ood ethnographers live full and complex lives, and they rightfully turn to their personal networks for research inspiration, resources, and samples of convenience'. Moreover, cricket was an underrepresented sport in the literature of this area (Nichol et al., 2019), further cementing the choice to study within this particular population. In line with the concept of emergence, the parts of the entity (i.e., organisation) were coaches and athletes within the squad. The relations between these 'parts' were the specialised roles and authority relations (Elder-Vass, 2010a).

Choosing cases did not simply stop at the commencement of the research programme; a realist account does not pre-determine its cases and reject any fluidity within the recruitment of

cases or participants. Indeed, a strength of the realist approach is the reflexivity that it affords to opportunistically or emergently select cases for investigation *throughout* the completion of the research (Emmel, 2013). For example, practically, within the present work, this meant organising interviews opportunistically with athletes who had appeared to be influenced (or not) in some way through (inter)action with a coach in order to appropriately address the research questions. Further, as the research project progressed, this opportunistic and reflexive approach also permitted the recognition of influences from wider stakeholders of coaching (i.e., family members of athletes), and how they may also have shaped the interpretation and influence of coaching practice. Purposive work in choosing cases this way enabled the revision, elaboration, and reconstruction of causal explanatory theory (Emmel, 2013).

5.2.2 *Gaining (and maintaining) access*

Informed consent was granted after obtaining institutional ethical approval and prior to the commencement of the indoor training programme in January 2018 through communication with official gatekeepers (Schensul & LeCompte, 2013). First, I met with the head coach of the under 17 squad (who also acted as lead of the performance pathway programme), with whom I had worked and formed a good relationship previously through my involvement as a coach within the same pathway. In addition, I also met with the director of cricket at the County Cricket Board (CCB), with whom I had developed a good rapport through my role working as a Chance to Shine[9] coach in educational environments. The purpose of both of these meetings was to outline the aims and details of the research to be carried out. The director of cricket then granted permission to conduct the research on behalf of the CCB (please refer to Appendix 1). Indeed, here, the trust which had been built up through my previous interactions with gatekeepers in this field helped to smooth the process of gaining access to the context (Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999). Given that I had already met, or worked alongside all coaches, and was familiar with some athletes, this meant

[9] Chance to Shine is a charitable organisation which delivers cricket opportunities to state schools and communities across England and Wales.

much of the struggle ethnographers typically face in obtaining access to a specific environment, was avoided (Krane & Baird, 2005).

I then met with the director of cricket and head coach of the under 17 squad again to discuss practicalities of working in and around the team environment. Here, participant anonymity, confidentiality and my role as a researcher were discussed at length. Resultantly, it was agreed that all participants would be allocated a pseudonym which would be used throughout this thesis and in the writing up of work for publication. Although the organisation were keen for me to be involved with coaching activities (i.e., to support the development of spin bowlers within the squad), I set my professional boundaries from the offset, making it clear that it would not be possible for me to be involved within the direct coaching activities of the squad (Anspach & Mizrachi, 2006). This was rationalised by explaining that, because I was interested in investigating the influence that the coach had on others, I did not want to directly influence the data that I was collecting. Indeed, doing so (going 'native' in the environment) may have meant that I became too involved and thus would have been less well positioned to conduct participant observation, or may have meant that I lost perspective of the research (Bonner & Tolhurst, 2002).

As will be acknowledged later in the methodology section, inevitably, the researcher will shape the environment in which they are situated (Ormston, Spencer, Barnard, & Snape, 2014). However, the extent to which this should occur required careful consideration, and I felt that being heavily involved in coaching activity would have left me in a position from which I would not have been able to observe and understand nuances of the culture, through being too directly involved. Ybema and Kamsteeg (2009) argued that unlike classical anthropological studies, whereby the aim was to make the unknown (cultures) familiar, most contemporary ethnographies actually have the aim of making the familiar strange (i.e., critically exploring familiar cultures) because researchers who do their fieldwork in their own 'global villages' (familiar environments) are naturally closer to their native habitants than ethnographers within anthropology traditionally used to be. Importantly, though, my role also required me to be attentive to unfamiliar or novel instances which helped to explain the research question; my role was not restricted to purely making the familiar strange.

Irrespective of my concerns over levels of involvement as a coach, I did state that I was happy to help with more administrative or logistical matters to assist the squad (i.e., putting out cones for warm-ups, helping to transport luggage and sorting juice for drinks intervals in matches). Setting such professional boundaries from the offset was particularly effective in avoiding situations of conflict and helped to maintain mutual understanding in terms of what was and was not permissible for me to do in my role throughout the ethnography (Ybema & Kamsteeg, 2009). Assisting with more administrative and logistical matters played a crucial role in helping me to develop further rapport and trust with participants, which, arguably, enabled me to generate richer data (Molnar & Purdy, 2016).

Although ethnographers have reported difficulties in gaining access to their research contexts (Hammersley, 2006), I experienced no such difficulties. Instead, my entrance to the context was relatively straightforward, perhaps as a result of my pre-existing rapport and relationships which had already been built up with key stakeholders of the context. Indeed, as Tracy (2013) reported, good ethnographers will reach out into their network of pre-established relations to purposively select information rich cases. Importantly, access to the squad was not something which was granted at the commencement of the project and then required no further attention. In fact, the continuation and maintenance of access to the squad was a matter which required constant reflexivity on my part as a researcher (Davies, 2008). Ethnographies are, by their very nature, political workings and necessitate astute emotional intelligence on the part of the ethnographer (Hammersley, 1992). I was by no means immune to the influence of norm circles and conscious reflexivity in the determination of my own actions as an ethnographer. Reflexively and consciously recognising such norms was an important step to enhance both the quality and rigour of the work, and, importantly, to maintain access to the environment in which I had become a part.

The researcher within an ethnography presents an interesting role. In some respects, I already found myself placed within some norm circles which intersected the organisation; I was a casually contracted employee of the organisation myself, albeit within another squad (the under 11 programme). As such, my behaviour and action will have likely been shaped in some form,

unconsciously, through my dispositions and experiences of practicing within this environment (e.g., communicating with coaches and players using acronyms and jargon which was specific to the sport and the organisation). However, in my capacity as a researcher within the under 17 squad, my role within this domain was not strictly bound to the values or norms of the specific squad (i.e., I was not directly a coach or athlete within the squad, nor was I contractually bound to this squad). Nonetheless, I recognised that acting and behaving in alignment with the norms of the organisation would be fruitful for my role and would better position me to both generate rich data, and be more likely to maintain my access to the squad.

As Elder-Vass (2012a) put forward, norm circles are intersectional, and it is unlikely that we are ever solely influenced by one norm circle. This point was particularly pertinent to explain my role and I became increasingly aware that, acting in my role, I was influenced by norms (through norm circles) relating to my involvement in cricket (as a player), sport coaching (disciplinary norm circle), university, and my familial upbringing among other experiences. Here, (conflicting) normative pressures often required me to make conscious decisions in relation to how I should act and behave. As Anspach and Mizrachi (2006, p. 714) put it: '[w]hen the canons of their disciplines collide with what researchers view as their normative obligations to research subjects, the two fields become the horns of an intractable dilemma'. This was evidenced, for example, when coaches began to openly discuss the performances of players with me. My dispositions in my role as a coaching practitioner suggested that it was entirely normal (and in fact good practice) to discuss athlete performance, however, my role as a researcher (informed by my university and sport coaching researcher norm circles) implied to me that discussing athlete performance could be unethical, especially given that I was working with the athletes to discuss their perceptions and perceived influences of coaching. My conscious decision, then, was to act as more of a 'sounding board' and not contribute toward discussions relating to athletes (e.g., athlete selection), instead just providing coaches with an opportunity to offload their thoughts to me. Thankfully, I was rarely asked to put forward my opinions about the performances of athletes,

likely as a result of the clear role expectations set out early in the project, as described earlier in this section.

Equally, my role did not mean that I was an 'innocent bystander', unable to act or contribute toward the environment in any way. In actual fact, many of my (structurally and agentially influenced) actions served to strengthen my position within the environment and helped to build rapport with stakeholders of the context, while not becoming a fully immersed participant. For example, in observing that the norm where a player performed particularly well (e.g., by scoring 50 runs when batting) was to applaud, I also applauded such actions. Although, ethically, the norms governing my role as a researcher told me that I should perhaps refrain from clapping so as to avoid influencing performance in any way myself, I consciously recognised that failing to clap would likely have had negative consequences for my ongoing role in this specific context. Players may have begun to question why I was not clapping performances, and thus may have been less inclined to take part in an interview. Further, I was able to observe that it was the norm for both coaches and athletes to use humour, 'banter', and 'shop talk', often specific to cricket, and, as such, I carefully selected moments to contribute toward, or laugh at such occurrences. An example here was when the assistant coach (Sam) mocked one of the players (Larry) upon his arrival to the ground for a match:

> Larry, alongside Roger and Jamie (other players) arrive at the ground together. Smartly dressed and carrying their cricket bags, all three look fresh faced and purposeful in their stride. Roger and Jamie wearing white shirts, donning their county tie (a mandatory form of dress upon arrival to matches), with black pants sufficiently overhanging their black polished shoes. Larry, also sporting his county tie and white shirt, on the other hand, has bright jazzy tartan pants on which stop abruptly at his ankles, exacerbating the fact that he is not wearing any socks. His bold brown suede shoes match the air of confidence stricken across his grinning face upon approaching the vicinity of the coaches, who have convened close to the dressing room and are discussing the day ahead – but interject their conversations by turning suddenly.
>
> *Sam (Assistant Coach):* 'I didn't know it was fucking fancy dress today, HA, HA, HA' [whilst eyeballing the brash assemblage of clothing Larry had selected].
>
> The players sitting around the changing area, Larry, and all of the coaching staff burst into roars of laughter. I too – by now feeling comfortable in and around the squad – unashamedly join them with a small snigger, albeit not pointing explicitly in the direction of Larry like some players.
>
> *Field note extract (17 July 2018)*

Remaining neutral (i.e., keeping a straight face) in such instances would have likely raised suspicion amongst players, who may have begun to endorse and enforce the norm to engage with humour.

Norm circles also influenced my actions in taking field notes (as will be introduced further in section 5.4.1). Specifically, at one of the squads' matches, one of the players picked up on the fact that I was making notes in my diary:

> *Jamie [looking curiously]:* 'What is it that you write when you are writing in your book, if you don't mind me asking, Adam?
>
> David, the head coach, had overheard Jamie's question.
>
> *David [sarcastically]:* 'He's writing down all the gold dust that comes out my mouth – he's going to write a book and make a fucking fortune from it, ha ha!'
>
> *Me:* 'Ha ha, yeah - I just make notes of key points in matches and sections where I think the coaches might have had an influence on something that has happened, Jamie. It's mainly to help my analysis when I watch back through the footage to be honest'
>
> *Jamie:* 'Ah, I see, nice one, ha ha'
>
> *Field note extract (18 July 2018)*

Although nothing here suggested that athletes were unhappy with me making notes, the very fact that an athlete had asked the question implied that others were probably curious about why and what I was writing. Perhaps they thought I was writing about or scrutinising them. Consequently, I came to recognise that writing field notes in the presence of others was not normative behaviour in this organisation. Indeed, coaches and players rarely took notes in the presence of others within the context studied, and, in my recognition of this normative behaviour, I subsequently changed my actions (conditioned by both my dispositions/habitus and conscious reflexivity). What was a norm within this environment, however, was the frequent use of mobile devices. As such, whenever I wanted to make field notes imminently, so as to not forget an important event, I typed a record within the notes section of my phone. This conformed to the norms of the environment, and, resultantly, helped to make my role as a researcher more inconspicuous (Hein, O'Donohoe, & Ryan, 2011). Such reflexivity helped me to maintain access within the context and establish a close rapport with both coaches and athletes, supporting the generation of information rich data (Cushion, 2014).

The morals and values to which I adhered as an ethnographer in this environment, then, did not exist in some objective independent form, waiting to be found. They were instead socially constructed and causally influenced through collective endorsement and enforcement in norm circles of both my present and past (Elder-Vass, 2010b). I relied on constant interaction with players and coaches to judge their levels of trust placed in me as a researcher. For instance, when, at one of the training sessions, David (the head coach) confided in me that he had applied for another coaching position, and that only his wife and I were aware of this information, this demonstrated to me the levels of trust that had been established as a result of my ongoing relations with him.

I first entered the field in November 2017 and was present at all events related to the activity of coaching during the winter training programme and the outdoor competitive match phase of the season. I attended training sessions, meetings, coach development events, competitive matches, and travelled to away matches with the team, staying in the same hotel. In-situ data collection stopped at the end of the 2018 season, in August, although additional interviews (as described in section 5.4) were conducted thereafter to finalise data collection.

5.2.3 *Meet the organisation and participants*

Nettleton CC (pseudonym) under 17 squad is a county representative-level squad, who form part of a county player pathway programme, running from an under 11 squad through to the full senior county team. The team is governed and administrated by the local CCB and play within the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) under 17 County Competition, including two-day Championship matches and a one-day cup competition. Nettleton CC trained together for ten weeks in a series of two-hour indoor sessions at a purpose-built cricket facility. Prior to the commencement of the competitive fixture schedule, the squad played one friendly two-day match against a neighbouring county and one friendly one-day match against a touring side from Australia. The competitive fixture schedule then encompassed playing opposition counties in both the two- and one-day formats, either home or away. Matches were structured in blocks on three consecutive days (i.e., on the first two days the two-day format would take place, with the one-day

match being played on the third day). This meant that away matches were turned into a mini 'tour' format whereby the squad would travel on the day before the first match and reside in the away county for the duration of the matches.

Each year, approximately 25 players are selected from their clubs to train with Nettleton CC under 17's. They are acknowledged to be the best players at that age group in the geographical location. Typically, the athletes' and coaches' engagement in their roles could be considered a form of serious leisure (Stebbins, 2011). Here, members of the organisation identified strongly as being 'representative cricketers/coaches' and demonstrated significant personal effort or devotion to the pursuit of the special skills, knowledge, and experience required to access that domain, in contrast to those who may be considered more casual or hobby cricketers. Unusually, and for the first time, the ECB had recently introduced new regulations ahead of the 2018 season meaning that squads were allowed to play three overage players (i.e., players from the older cohort, up to one year older than would normally be permitted to play). This regulation was introduced by the ECB in an attempt to raise the standard of matches for under 17 level cricket. The squad of players evolved over the course of the study, predominantly through injury, players stepping up to play in the full senior team, or as a result of other conflicting commitments (e.g., educational).

The training location, in which the largest proportion of observations took place was situated within a high-performance indoor cricket centre with purpose-built flooring, netting and bowling machine facilities. Matches were then played at a variety of cricket clubs around the country. Working with Nettleton CC under 17's I spent time with, observed and/or interviewed:

- **The Head Coach 'David',** who was in his early forties and had been involved in cricket for most of his life as a player (and was still currently an active player at the time of the research). David had first transitioned into a coaching role with Nettleton Cricket Board 10 years ago, starting as a Cricket Development Officer. As a player, he had played cricket to a national level as a junior, and at Minor Counties level as a senior. David had coached at club level, and had experience in coaching a range of county junior teams, progressing his coaching role from under 11 cricket to his current role as head coach of the under 17's. He

was beginning to become involved more with senior county sides (e.g., the development senior and full county senior squads), and had recently been appointed as head of the junior player pathway programme. David was a full-time member of staff at the County Cricket Board and was also involved in the delivery of coaching within school environments as part of this role.

- **'Sam'**, in his early sixties, was David's **Assistant Coach**, and played a supporting role. He often stepped into the Head Coach role when David was not present. In his support role Sam frequently took warm-ups, provided encouragement for players, and reinforced plans and goals previously established by David. Sam had extensive experience as a player at local club senior level. He also held coaching roles with the under 15's squad within the same county pathway. Sam was on a casual, paid contract with the County Cricket Board.
- **'Douglas'**, in his late sixties, was the **Team Manager** of the squad and his main responsibilities included administrational and organisational activity (e.g., liaising with parents for player selection, sorting transport to matches, contacting umpires and opposition squads). He also stepped into more senior coaching roles when Sam and David were not present. Douglas had extensive experience of playing cricket at a local club senior level. He was a retired PE Teacher/Assistant Head Teacher, and was also on a casual, paid contract with Nettleton Cricket Board.

Additional staff at Nettleton CC who came into contact with coaches and players, but did not directly form part of the research process, were the senior county first team captain (Tim), the strength and conditioning intern (Omar), the Director of Cricket at the county board (Icarus) and the Chairman of the County Board of Directors (Robert). Players, who featured in field notes or participated within the semi-structured and recall interviews were:

- Lawrence, in his second year with the squad,
- Roger, in his second year with the squad,
- Connor, in his second year with the squad,
- Dylan, in his second year with the squad,

- John, in his third year with the squad (playing as an overage player),
- Larry, in his third year with the squad (playing as an overage player),
- Derek, in his second year with the squad,
- Jamie, in his first year with the squad,
- Michael, in his first year with the squad,
- Simon, in his first year with the squad,
- Micah, in his third year with the squad,
- Maurice, in his first year with the squad,
- Alan, in his first year with the squad,
- Evan, in his third year with the squad (playing as an overage player),
- Jake, in his second year with the squad,
- Winston, in his second year with the squad,
- Norman, in his first year with the squad,
- Matthew, in his third year with the squad (playing as an overage player),
- Sunhil, in his first year with the squad.
- Oscar, in his first year with the squad.
- Thomas, in his second year with the squad.

5.2.4 *My role in the research process*

One of the great challenges associated with any type of ethnographic research is the positioning of the role adopted by the researcher (Drake & Harvey, 2014). This can play a critical part in the development of trust and enable the research aims or questions to either flourish or become incredibly difficult to access (Leslie, Paradis, Gropper, Reeves, & Kitto, 2014). Tracy (2013) proposed and defined four main roles of ethnographers:

- **Complete participant** – researchers study contexts in which they are already a member or are fully enmeshed within the context, culture and values. This role can be covert in nature.

- **Play participant** – fieldworkers become active members within the community of interest, engaging in a range of activities. However, the researcher can opt in or out and adopt a more 'independent' stance on the research domain of interest.
- **Focused participant observer** – the researcher enters the environment with an explicit researcher status and a structured agenda of data required to be obtained from the environment. Long-term immersion within the field is not commonly conducted.
- **Complete observer** – the researcher remains at the periphery of the event or environment. Aiming to attain greater 'objectivity' is a primary facet of this role frame; participants are frequently unaware of being observed within this type of role.

I did not feel that my role within the cricket performance environment fell strictly within any one of these roles. Instead, through deliberate consideration of the impact of my role, my position as an ethnographer fell across a blend of approaches. While I continued to coach in the same performance pathway, albeit with a different squad, in many ways I felt as if I was already part of the culture and environment, living and adhering to the organisations values, to a certain degree. As earlier introduced, then, the aim was to predominantly make the familiar strange, instead of making the strange familiar (as with traditional anthropological studies) (Ybema & Kamsteeg, 2009). That being said, I did not feel that I was acting as a 'complete participant' within the context.

Although I had a strong existing relationship with the head coach and other key members of the coaching context (i.e., team manager, assistant coach, and some players), I felt that it was best to not go fully native (i.e., research from the point of view of a coach working with the squad). Within an initial meeting with the head coach, I was asked to act as an extra 'pair of hands', getting involved with the coaching of spin bowling, due to my personal areas of coaching expertise. This acted as a critical point of reflection for me. After deliberating, and conversing with critical friends (i.e., my academic peers and supervisors), I came to understand that I was required to maintain a professional distance in order to appropriately address the research questions. Acting as a coach within this context would have limited my time, availability and attentiveness to intricately explore the micro-level (inter)actions which took place between coaches and athletes, and thus I could have

missed instrumental data relating to the research questions. While I was in many ways positively immersed within the culture (e.g., helping with drinks breaks and attending team meals after matches on tour), I did not feel as if I was a complete participant.

The closest alignment of the role descriptions as put forward by Tracy (2013) with my own role was that of the 'play participant': where fieldworkers become an active member of the community, but at the same time their membership is not bound to formal regularities of the context. One foot is able to be kept outside of the context, in order to conduct field notes, interviews, and intermittently leave. Where the research purpose is explicit in this sense, the ethnographer is able to maintain an appropriate distance and not become so acculturated within the context that they become blind to the cultures, values and behaviours which are inherently part of its fabric. Similarly, researchers are also able to 'go beyond reports that rely on the five senses – of what they see, hear, taste, touch, and smell – to what they also intuitively feel' (Tracy, 2013, p. 109). While I did enter the context with an explicit researcher status (as put to the participants) in order to bring transparency and set professional boundaries or expectations, aligning with Tracy's (2013) 'focused participant observer' role, I spent an extended period of time within the field. Therefore, my role frame did not sit fully within this description and instead developed throughout the ethnography. Moreover, my remit was not completely passive, nor was it covert or free from informed consent. Hence my role was clearly not that of a 'complete observer'.

It would have been naïve to think that my role as the ethnographer would not shape the activity of coaching in some way. Further, it was not the intention to align with more positivist forms of research, aiming to make the role of the researcher objective (researcher as an outsider; St. Pierre, 2016). As Manning (1997) implied, the questions, observations and actions of the ethnographer will inevitably have an impact on the actions of those operating in the context and the activity of coaching. Likewise, the actions of the research participant also inform and shape the research process (Manning, 1997). Within a critical realist informed ethnographic study, the aim is not to control for the role of the researcher, but instead to channel it (Layder, 1998). Pawson and Tilley (1997) suggest the researcher and participant play fluid roles within the research process;

both researchers and participants play the role of the 'teacher' and 'learner' at different time points to generate and/or refine theory.

5.3 Methodological bricolage

Critical realists consider a distinct ontology of a world which is real and *can* exist independently to us, and an epistemology suggesting that causal theories generated by us inevitably remain fallible and open to (re)interpretation (Scott, 2005). Hence, we must be critical and reflect upon individual perspectives, in order to move closer toward an understanding of the real. This has significant implications for the adoption of methodology and method. Generation of *causal* theory and an emergent understanding of how mechanisms explain events is of upmost importance, as opposed to research being guided by the adoption of a stringent doctrine of dogmatic research methods. In this sense, Ackroyd and Karlsson (2014) suggest that methods are gateways to information, they are seen as instrumental in developing knowledge and understanding for the researcher. They do not exist for their own sake, and they should not be seen as ends in themselves.

Structure and agency are also prominent in the assumptions posited by individual paradigms, and, as such, have important implications for the choice of methodology and method. As has been put forward, critical realism provides a compatible position through which the influence of both structure *and* agency can be accounted for in the determination of action (Elder-Vass, 2007b). Actions have determinant causes (are shaped by structural entities), but we as agents have the capacity to reason and make choices within this structural frame (Kaidesoja, 2013). Furthermore, 'structures are themselves the product of agency – as critical realists note "no structure without actions" – but they are not reducible to individuals or under agential control' (North, 2017, p. 146). Hence, our research design, ontological and epistemological considerations must account for both structure *and* agency, and be reflexive to the possibility for the world to change.

In line with the key aims of this thesis – to explore intricate relationships between coaching practice and its influence (on others) within a social domain – clearly interpretive approaches were critical (Pawson & Tilley, 1997). However, coaches' reports of their own practice are known to be

frequently inconsistent (i.e., they often misalign with perspectives of independent observers, or athletes; Smith et al., 2016). Further, because individuals' actions are often (partly) influenced unconsciously (i.e., by dispositions stored through interactions with norm circles; Elder-Vass, 2010a), participants are often unable to identify the full set of entities which have influenced their action in the present. Subsequently, this required a bricolage of methods to assess the underpinning causal mechanisms which influenced events and actions at the level of the real and actual, allowing the research to develop (fallible) theory. Indeed, within critical realist approaches participants' accounts are often the starting point of research, however, they are by no means necessarily the end point (Watson, 2011).

In order to sufficiently explain the structural forces which innervate and shape the (subjective) responses of participants, we require the use of multiple methods (Danermark et al., 1997). Layder (1998), in this respect, conceptually argued that we need a blend of methods to address the dispositions and sense making of agents, while simultaneously accounting for objectivity (e.g., attempting to explain some of the real causal entities and mechanisms related to these dispositions and reflexive sense making). Such an approach is coherent with critical methodological pluralism, as put forward by Danermark et al. (1997). Methodological plurality posits that, given the complexity of the social domain and the multiple determination (or contingent nature) of events, research problems are required to be addressed using a variety of research methods. The selection of such methods is not simply a matter of patching together any combination (methodological relativism), what Bhaskar (2010) might refer to as *unprincipled eclecticism*. Instead, 'the foundation for what is suitable or not is to be found in the relationship between metatheory and method' (Danermark et al., 1997, p. 152). In other words, the assumptions as laid out within the philosophical approach to the research must be compatible with and inform the selection of methods to address the research problem.

Consequently, given the emergentist ontology presented and the view that events are multiply determined (Elder-Vass, 2010a), methods capable of detecting entities, causal powers, mechanisms and the role that they play in influencing social events at both a structural and agential

level were required. Interviews and participant observation within a longitudinal, ethnographic approach were congruent with the central tenets of critical realism presented, and formed imperative components of this work. These methods were also supplemented by field notes and stimulated recall interviews to permit a deepened exploration of in-situ events and their complex causal explanations, in line with the arguments presented within the theoretical framework (see section 4.5). Such methodology enabled the research to generate and explain data at the three stratified layers of ontology (i.e., the real, actual and empirical). This is paramount to critical realist work in order to 'peel back' the layers of causal complexity.

5.4 Methods

After obtaining ethical approval from the ethics committee in the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences at Northumbria University, four primary research tools or methods were used to generate data in light of the research questions: a) participant observation and field notes, b) semi-structured interviews, and c) stimulated recall interviews. In order to sufficiently describe the research process undertaken, here I critically introduce each method in turn. Just as methodologies are not distinct from paradigmatic considerations, neither are research methods. In fact, a critical realist research project can be considered as a 'chain of meta-theoretical concepts' running from ontology, epistemology and aetiology right through to methodology, research methods, the objective of the research, and the role of theory in explaining phenomena (Fleetwood, 2014).

Ethnographic methodology belonging to a critical realist position necessitates an understanding that, in the social sciences, researchers are themselves part of their own field of inquiry (Bhaskar, 1998 [1979]). The research methods which we use as part of ethnography require input from the researcher, and thus the knowledge we generate through these methods is concept-dependent (epistemological relativism). Indeed:

> the social sciences are part of their own field of inquiry, in principle susceptible to explanation in terms of the concepts and laws of the explanatory theories they employ; so that they are *internal* with respect to their subject-matter in a way in which the natural sciences are not' (Bhaskar, 1998 [1979], p. 47).

What this implies, then, is that a necessary feature of research in the social sciences is for us to be 'sensitive to and take account of our own implication in and effects on' the object(s) of our research (Davies, 2008, pp. 22-23). As such, in introducing the methods used below, I offer accounts of my role in this process – not as an 'innocent bystander' – but as an agent involved in the construction of knowledge myself. Each of the research tools and methods employed played an important role in the generation of data. Here, methods did not exist as standalone items; methods were interconnected, and data from different research tools helped to inform and reflect back upon the (ongoing) process of data collection in an iterative manner (Schensul et al., 1999).

5.4.1 *Participant observation and field notes*

Observation formed an essential segment of the overall methodology and required detailed noticing from my role as an ethnographer (Mason, 2002), as well as video and audio recording of events. Participant observation noticeably differs from experimental studies where the researcher attempts to carefully control conditions or behaviour. Instead, the purpose of utilising participant observation is to account for the (naturally occurring) ways in which people think, feel and act in the courses of their lives (Jorgensen, 2015). Specifically, observation afforded an opportunity to understand the emergent influence of social structure (i.e., potential influence of norm circles). Through observing interactions between members of the organisation, their specialised roles and authority relations, I was able to generate fallible understanding and explanation of the emergent properties of the organisation. For example, I was able to build knowledge of how coaches (or others) attempted to endorse or enforce specific role norms and the potential for norm circles to causally influence action (alongside other entities). I was then able to consider how the enactment and coordination of such roles created emergent properties of the organisation (Elder-Vass, 2010a). In total, I spent 182 hours observing and being immersed within the context.

Field notes are an integral part of the ethnographic process and go hand in hand with participant observation (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2001). In many respects, field notes could be seen as the 'glue' that held the research process and data analysis together. Field notes permitted

the narration and interpretation of events or occurrences which had been observed (Wolcott, 2005). Moreover, they helped to provide supplementary detail, in order to explain the intricate and nuanced relationships between coaching practice and its (non)influence on others. Raw notes, or 'jottings' (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995), were first taken with a notebook and pen to make accounts of any important moments within sessions or matches, where coaching practice appeared to be influential (or non-influential). In addition, any wider events which were deemed to hold explanatory potential in relation to the research questions were logged (Tracy, 2013). Specifically, my notes recorded what I saw in the context, how I witnessed it, who was present (and who was not), what they said, how they acted, and how others also behaved, among other things. Resonating with the work of Schensul and LeCompte (2013), the context presented numerous opportunities for informal conversations with stakeholders. This included downtime within matches (e.g., when the team were batting and thus only two batters were directly involved in the game), time spent in the hotel, at meals, or during travelling time to and from fixtures. These opportunities provided important interactions from which notes were written up to better identify and explain coaching (non)influence. Indeed, casual conversations with key stakeholders in the field presented an excellent opportunity to identify and log critical incidents (please see section 5.5) which had high salience for the research questions. Notes taken in all of these environments were pivotal in providing additional detail to the observations and video recording, thus providing a basis for questioning within interviews and the stimulated recall process.

As recommended by Goffman (1989), and as rationalised in my reflexive accounts of gaining and maintaining access to the context in section 5.2.2, wherever possible field notes were not taken directly as incidents or events were occurring. This was especially the case for sensitive, or potential inflammatory activities in which the immediate recording of field notes may have caused embarrassment or problems for participants. By delaying such recordings, this positively contributed toward the development of rapport with participants, through demonstrating my reading of scenarios and empathy for the context that I was working within. Where it was deemed plausible, and indeed important to take field notes close to an event occurring, this was logged as a note within my phone

in an inconspicuous manner. Subsequently, field notes were then typed up and formally logged, including interpretations, initial critical analytic reflections, probes for future questions to explore, or items to address (Emerson et al., 1995). This was completed as soon as possible after the notes had been taken, and always before the next session or match, to avoid memories being obscured by new events.

Video and audio recordings of activities were also used to supplement processes of observation. In indoor sessions, video camcorders (Sony HDR-CX625) were placed on balconies, at either end of the cricket centre, approximately 10 metres from ground level, with one camera connected to a wireless lapel microphone worn by the head coach (or lead coach in the event that the head coach was not present). In some sessions an action camera was also suspended from the net which surrounded the hall. This camera was positioned approximately 20 metres from ground level and allowed a wider view of the overall session content to be recorded. The different camera angles permitted close analysis of the coaching practice delivered throughout the session, as well as athlete responses to such (inter)action. Similarly, at outdoor matches, one camera was placed in a location which was suitable to capture coach-athlete (inter)actions and the performance of athletes, with minimal interruption (Figure 1.4).

Figure 1.4 Typical video recording set-up

This camera was again linked to a wireless microphone worn by the lead coach to overlay audio recording onto the video footage.

Where it was not feasible, practical or ethical to use video recording (i.e., in the dressing room area for team talks), events in these environments were instead audio recorded using a digital voice recorder (Olympus VN-741PC). Together with the video footage and field notes, this allowed critical incidents (i.e., key interactions between coaches and others, particularly where these interactions appeared to be influential or non-influential in shaping subsequent action) to be identified[10]. Critical incidents can be defined as 'an interpretation of the significance of an event' (Tripp, 1993, p. 8). Importantly, critical incidents do not need to be

> dramatic or obvious: they are mostly straightforward accounts of very commonplace events that occur in routine professional practice which are critical in the rather different sense that they are indicative of underlying trends, motives and structures.

[10] For a more detailed discussion of the use of critical incidents and the Critical Incident Technique (CIT), please refer to section 5.5.

> These incidents appear to be 'typical' rather than 'critical' at first sight, but are rendered critical through analysis' (Tripp, 1993, pp. 24-25).

Critical incident identification was triangulated through acknowledging events, which, from the perspective of coaches, athletes, and through my own role as researcher, held significance to the research questions. These critical incidents were then located in the video recordings, and formed the basis of stimulated recall interviews with both coaches and athletes. Importantly, the video footage served only as an additional tool to enrich and complement the methodological bricolage utilised; capturing every single action from every possible angle was not the aim. Doing so would have likely made participants feel as if they were under surveillance (Jones & Toner, 2016), and thus could have had negative consequences on the research process or participants' perceptions of it.

Documentation obtained through my participation as a researcher within the field also provided useful sources of information to draw upon in relation to coaching practice and how it influenced (or did not influence) others. Particularly, I was included within text and e-mail distribution lists which were used for communication purposes between coaches, players and their parents. Additionally, through attending pathway coaching meetings, I was sent a copy of the handbook used to signify the aims and intentions of the programme for specific age groups. Posters were also used and stuck to the changing room walls to identify and remind players of their targets or values to be adhered to. These were split up into the disciplines of batting, bowling and fielding and a different set of posters were used for two- and one-day matches. Importantly, as Elder-Vass (2012a) identified, 'rules' in this written format do not causally influence our actions; it is norm circles that (through the actions of agents) endorse or enforce these written rules and shape dispositions or beliefs, which possess causal power to influence action. 'Rules are encodings of statements we are inclined to conform to because of the causal power of the associated norm circles' (Elder-Vass, 2012a, p. 49). As such, it is important to include encodings (e.g., writing) in material artefacts (i.e., documents) within the overall methodological approach. However, an emphasis must also be placed on how social institutions causally influence the behaviour of agents in line with these writings to fully understand their creation and capacity to explain action.

Participant observation was therefore particularly attentive to the means through which (inter)actions between agents influenced the subsequent actions of others (or not).

5.4.2 *Semi-structured interviews*

Archer (2003) pointed to the usefulness of semi-structured interviews to explore and analyse the reflexivity, reasoning, sense making and strategising of participants (also referred to as the 'inner conversation'). Indeed, in the present study, interviews were important to understand the thoughts and feelings of participants: to assess why coaches and athletes perceived their own and others' (inter)actions as they did (Purdy, 2014). One particular advantage of semi-structured interviews over structured interview formats is that there is scope to move away from the interview schedule and discuss fruitful lines of inquiry which proceed as a natural flow to the interview (Patton, 2015). As such, further depth is able to be generated to substantiate and explain claims made (Purdy, 2014). Clearly here, social science research must be receptive to the interpretive dimension of actions and interaction (Smith & Elger, 2014). While interpretive data forms (i.e., informed by participants' individual perspectives) provide us with an important starting point, they only partially contribute to the overall picture. Individual narratives attempting to understand entities and powers at the level of the real must always be recognised as fallible (North, 2017). This is especially prevalent given that, according to the ontological and epistemological assumptions of critical realism, we must aim to reflect upon epistemological standpoints in order to move closer toward an understanding of entities at the level of the real. For example, people will generally hold knowledge concerning a rationale for the way in which they act. However, they can never, themselves, fully conceptualise the entire set of structural conditions through which an action and its consequences have been shaped. This has important implications for methodology interested in understanding the influence of agents' actions on others. Interviews alone, do not necessarily allow us to delve into the depths required to understand the causal mechanisms and entities operating at the level of the real or the actual on this topic.

As outlined in section 3.3.4, multiple methods are beneficial in more fully investigating the influence of coaches on others. Here, researchers 'are required to step outside stakeholder

narratives to make an *independent judgement* about the coaching structures under examination' (North, 2017, p. 227). Data collection is

> thus charged – *not* with the descriptively infinite task of capturing the stakeholder's ideas, beliefs, hopes, aspirations about a program, but with the task of demonstrating which aspects of these beliefs are relevant to the *CMO* (contexts, mechanisms and outcomes) theory under test, so that the respondent can contribute to that test (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p. 164).

Interviews were initially conducted with coaches to understand their goals, intentions, and the role norms which they were likely to endorse or enforce. This then permitted a reference point, from which subsequent research could be informed and framed against. Interviews were also conducted with other key stakeholders of coaching (i.e., athletes and other coaches) in order to get a more rounded picture of the coaching context, and an understanding of wider socio-cultural, institutional, interpersonal and individual components interjecting this context (North, 2017). The incorporation of multiple perspectives was further rationalised by findings from the systematic review (see Chapter 3) which highlighted that, to date, empirical investigation focused on coaching practice and athlete 'outcomes' has tended to only consult athletes. Interviews with a broader range of stakeholders (i.e., assistant coaches, team managers, and athletes), in addition to the head coach, helped to provide rich insights, deepening understanding of the research problem. Specifically, interviews with these stakeholders focused on perceptions of the coaching context, coaching practice, and, particularly, (inter)actions which played a role in influencing (or not) others.

Pawson and Tilley (1997) suggest that the generation of theory is central to the interview process in realist frameworks. All interviews therefore maintained a focus on attempting to generate theory which explained *how*, *when*, *why*, and u*nder which circumstances* coaching practice did (or did not) influence others. Early interviews were primarily conducted with the head coach to understand more about his philosophy, intentions for practice, goals for the squad and how he perceived his coaching practice to influence athletes. Further, interviews conducted with athletes and other coaches aimed to identify goals, perceptions of coaching practice and its influence from the perspective of multiple stakeholders. There is an important dynamic to be observed within critical realist interviewing, whereby the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee is

seen as fluid; both the researcher and participant assume the role of 'teacher' and 'learner' at different points in relation to the generation of theory (Pawson & Tilley, 1997). This allowed causal explanatory theory to be developed, refined, secured, or falsified, through critical consideration from more than one perspective.

Timing of interviews was another important component to be considered. The reflexive approach adopted meant that interviews were selected to take place at moments which were considered to be important to address the research questions, and, specifically, to generate theory in relation to the influence of coaching practice (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2018). Botti, Orfali, and Iyengar (2009) recognised the value of conducting interviews which have the potential to evoke more emotional responses (i.e., closer to an event occurring or being experienced), and those which allow greater time for participants to reflect upon and make sense of an event. Importantly, superseding the decision of *when* to interview at all times was the careful consideration of ethical standards and implications (i.e., ensuring that interviews were not conducted at times that could promote ethical dilemmas for participants, or indeed me as the researcher). Such intricacies necessitated a shift away from more stringent methodology whereby interviews would have been conducted at consistent time points around every training session or match. Instead, interviews were conducted at a range of time points. This included interviews directly before and after sessions or matches to access the often highly charged emotional intentions, responses and reflections of coaches and athletes, without interfering with naturalistic coaching practice or (inter)actions. Furthermore, interviews conducted after the session or match (not immediately afterwards, but typically within a three week period) were also implemented to allow more time for reflection (Mouchet et al., 2014). These interviews were also supplemented with stimulated recall interviews to permit a deeper analysis of critical moments (i.e., coach-athlete interactions) within sessions and how these were perceived to have had an impact on the athlete or not (see section 5.4.3).

Through my previous experiences and connections within cricket, I had already developed a relationship with the majority of the coaches and athletes whom I interviewed. This was seen as

an advantage within the interview process, as less time was required to be spent on developing an initial rapport with participants. All interviews were conducted at the location of training/matches, or another suitable location which was convenient for the participant. Further, interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis at a location which was quiet and comfortable (e.g., Figure 1.5).

Figure 1.5 Typical set-up for interviews.

Ethically, this was important, especially given the content of interviews often included the discussion of (inter)actions with other members of the squad. Discussing such sensitive issues in the presence of colleagues would have likely constrained responses, or induced embarrassment/discomfort for the participant (Elmir, Schmied, Jackson, & Wilkes, 2011). Indeed, this was one of the main reasons that semi-structured interviews were selected over focus groups. Although focus groups may bring benefits through participants being able to collaboratively discuss content (Barbour, 2007), the topics discussed within interviews (both positive and negative interactions with other coaches and athletes) precluded the use of this method.

In practice, with the exception of some interviews with the head coach which were purely semi-structured, stimulated recall and semi-structured interviews were often combined or merged as the thrust of the discussion dictated (Coleman & Murphy, 1999). For example, where a coach or athlete made reference to a specific incident from a previous session/match when in a semi-structured interview, video footage of this incident was then found and played on a laptop (stimulated recall) in order to probe and explore the topic in further detail. In total, 12 interviews were conducted with coaches and 22 with athletes. 46 hours of interview data were generated, and the average duration of each individual interview was 79 minutes. Multiple interviews were conducted with the same participant in an iterative fashion, which sought to clarify points or generate greater depth of explanation (Johnson, 2001).

Initial questions were focussed on building/developing a relationship and rapport with the interviewee. This was an important feature of the interview, even where I was already acquainted with the participant, to make sure that the interviewee felt comfortable. Indeed, where interviewees feel comfortable they are more likely to give detailed, constructive responses (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). These initial questions were based around an exploration of the background of the participant, and their broad experiences within cricket. The main body of questions were then centred on intentions and perceptions of coaching practice and its (non)influence. Probing follow-up questions were used to explore responses in greater detail, to clarify information, or to ask for a rationale behind a given response (i.e. “could you go into further detail about that [event] and maybe provide an example please?”). While participants responded to questions, I employed active listening techniques and attempted to portray body language which showed that I was genuinely interested in what was being said (O'Reilly, 2012). This allowed follow-up questions to be constructed which were based upon the responses of participants (Tracy, 2013). To close interviews, participants were asked a generic question (i.e. “Is there anything else which you feel we have not covered, and you think would be relevant to bring in now?”).

As May (1999) highlighted, the social distance between the researcher and the interviewee (e.g., the closeness of characteristics or attributes of both parties) can also play an important role in

eliciting responses from participants. Given my previous experience of coaching and playing within the same type of environment under study, this was arguably an asset to the research process, meaning the social distance between myself and the research participants was narrowed. It was anticipated that this helped to facilitate responses, and in particular, the detail of content provided by coaches and athletes. Conversely, having (coaching and playing) experience which closely resonated with participants could also be viewed as a limitation. For example, it is likely that I made assumptions when interpreting and explaining data based on my own readings and biases as a practitioner. In fact, such subjectivity has previously been recognised in qualitative work as both a strength *and* a limitation (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2018). As will be discussed at greater length in section 5.7, discussing events, interpretations and explanations with critical friends was crucial to maintain a reflexive approach, which helped to mitigate limitations associated with researcher bias. All interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder and transcribed verbatim.

5.4.3 *Stimulated recall*

Stimulated recall has been posited as a research method which can be used to generate ecological and holistic understandings of decision making, and is capable of explaining (inter)actions in light of social, contextual and agential influences (Lyle, 1999). Specifically, stimulated recall involves using video or audio recording of events which are played back to participants, providing them with an opportunity to watch and comment on what has happened and what their thought process was. Indeed, in this regard, stimulated recall provided a fruitful means through which the research questions, in line with the theoretical framework of emergentist structure-agency relations, could be investigated. Particularly, providing participants with opportunities to reflect upon video footage of specific events from training sessions or matches enabled closer understanding of entities which may have contributed toward their own (inter)actions. Bhaskar (1998 [1979]) discussed the use of moments of crises to explore causal mechanisms operating at deeper ontological levels which explain the occurrence of events. While this study did not set out to purposefully identify ‘crisis’ points as such, this same concept of

searching for *critical* incidents or important moments in the session whereby coaching interactions appeared to influence (or not influence) athletes was implemented (Purdy et al., 2009; Purdy et al., 2008). Following Gilbert, Trudel, and Haughian (1999), the coaches, players and I were involved in the identification of these critical incidents. Such moments formed the focus of dialogue within the stimulated recall interviews. My field notes and iterative engagement with data collected through other research methods supported my identification of these incidents.

Recall interviews served the research aims through allowing detailed access to (retrospective) thoughts, cognitions and reflections of athletes and coaches, both from the time of the incident, and at the time of watching the footage (Lyle, 2003). Without the use of stimulated recall, such detailed reflections and recollections of intentions and the influence of practice would have been highly unlikely to be achieved. Retrospective recall methods were selected over 'think aloud' techniques (verbalising thoughts at the time of the event occurring), as although the latter method is useful to identify cognitions 'in the moment', it is also prone to interfere with performance, or cognition as it naturally occurs (Dickson, McLennan, & Omodei, 2000). As Archer (2003) posited, through our internal conversations and deliberation we are able to shape decision making and action. However, actions are also often simultaneously influenced by dispositions stored through interaction with structural influences (Elder-Vass, 2007b). Hence, asking participants to verbalise their cognitions in line with a think aloud protocol could have interrupted the process of conscious deliberation coming immediately before the implementation of action (Davidson, 2001), and thus could have negatively impacted performance. This was to be avoided, particularly as the principle aim of the study was to observe *naturally occurring* relationships between coaching practice and its influence: not to interfere in, or manipulate this complex interplay. Further, reflection in the moment would have meant that participants were perhaps less likely to consider or identify previous historical (inter)action and how this might have shaped their behaviour in the present.

In line with the theoretical framework adopted, the recall methodology provided a crucial opportunity to obtain access to post-event descriptions of beliefs surrounding motivations for

actions employed (Davidson, 2001). While admittedly this method may be prone to misrepresentation of true thinking at the time of the event (Davidson, 2001), to have interrupted coach-athlete interaction, or athlete performance (e.g., through think aloud methodology) would have been severely destructive to the purpose and ongoing implementation of the study. Moreover, given the epistemological and ontological distinction posited in critical realist philosophy, we must recognise that theory is fallible and open to constant revision and rewriting anyway (Scott, 2005) – our causal attributions can never be taken to equate directly to the 'truth'; other entities are also likely to be interacting to produce the events which we are attempting to explain. Recall methodology therefore provided a useful position to understand potential conscious reasoning (acting as an entity within the mechanism) which underpinned coach and athlete (inter)action. Stimulated recall was not, however, sufficient in itself to explain the overall interaction of entities; hence, it was used alongside other methods.

Stimulated recall interviews were conducted as close to the session occurring as possible, in order to prevent memory decay and minimise the time delay between event and recall (Lyle, 2003). Enough time also needed to be given for the researcher to analyse the footage, identify critical incidents, and to become cognisant of relevant theory (e.g., theoretical presuppositions and theory which may be challenged by the data) before entering the recall interview, however. Stimulated recall was therefore typically conducted within three weeks of the previous session or match taking place. The same teacher-learner concept identified earlier within the '*semi-structured interviews*' section (section 5.4.2) was also adopted within stimulated recall interviews, allowing theory to be checked, challenged, confirmed, or refined.

Recall interviews formed an essential piece to the methodological 'jigsaw' as they permitted the research to access insights into the coach's intentions of why they selected a specific element of coaching practice, in attempt to influence athletes in a specific way. Athletes were also able to provide their perceptions in terms of what they felt the coach intended to do with this practice. Further, stimulated recall allowed reflection on the coach's and athletes' behalf, to compare and contrast how the practice was intended to, and how it actually influenced athletes. At an

epistemological level this permitted the integration of multiple perspectives, combined with the researcher's perspective from field notes and analysis of observation/interview data, to progress understanding at the level of the real. All stimulated recall interviews were conducted in alignment with the procedures adopted for semi-structured interviews (identified earlier in section 5.4.2). Participants were reminded of the purpose of the interview: to explore perceptions around how coaching practice had influenced them or others (or indeed if it had). Interviewees were told that they could stop, pause, rock and roll footage at any time to comment on and explain the critical incidents presented. Audio from the video footage played within the recall interview was sufficiently loud to be detected by the digital recording device, so that it was clear as to which specific critical incident was being discussed when conducting data analysis.

5.5 Data analysis

Increasingly diverse research questions covered by social ethnographic research necessitate a wide range of approaches for data analysis at multiple levels (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). Indeed, in this regard, there is no one universal formula for the successful analysis of ethnographic data (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). 'What sorts of pattern one is looking for depends, of course, on research focus and theoretical orientation. These will also affect how much data one collects and how one approaches the analysis' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 163). Perhaps, however, a common feature of ethnographic data analysis can be found in the commitment and necessity to become sufficiently familiar with the data set to describe or explain actions of the people under study. As with any part of a robust research process (e.g., formulation of the research question, methodology, method), data analysis is no different in the sense that it should not be divorced from the philosophical assumptions which have guided the development of the work (Taylor, 2014). The purpose of this section is to introduce the reader to the key modes of (critical realist) analysis which were employed in the present work.

Two primary modes of logic typically underpin analysis within a critical realist (emergentist) standpoint: *retroduction* and *retrodiction* (Elder-Vass, 2010a). Retroduction concerns the identification of entities (i.e., parts or things), their causal powers and the mechanisms which

drive them (Fletcher, 2017). Retrodiction, then, is the analysis of how entities and their powers interact (the mechanism) to *cause*, produce and explain actual events (Lawson, 1997). Indeed, empirical science relies on both of these activities: '[r]etrodiction depends on a retroductive understanding of the causal capabilities of the interacting entities, while retroduction must ultimately be validated by successful application to retrodictive cases' (Elder-Vass, 2012a, p. 19). Because events are viewed as multiply determined according to a critical realist perspective (Bhaskar, 1975), careful consideration of multiple interacting entities is required. As such, this necessitates a reflexive and iterative approach to generate accounts which are recognised as fallible. Here, throughout the process of analysis, I constantly asked the questions (at deeper levels each time): (a) what was *causing* events to occur? (b) Which entities (e.g., individuals and social structure) were interacting? And, (c) how were they interacting to explain the event?

Given that the focus of the research and its questions were to *explain* the occurrence of events or actions in light of the (non)influence of coaching practice, and to reintroduce the complexity currently missing in many accounts on this topic, this had important considerations for tools used to closely analyse the data. As such, the analysis of data was guided by the identification and explanation of critical incidents[11]. Identifying and analysing data with a focus on critical incidents helped to organise and make sense of a large data set in relation to the specific research questions (Angelides, 2001). Critical incident analysis (CIA), or the critical incident technique (CIT) as it is commonly referred to, has been employed within a broad range of disciplines including, but not limited to, aviation (Flanagan, 1954), nursing (Minghella & Benson, 1995), teaching (Angelides, 2001; Francis, 1997), and social care (Lister & Crisp, 2007). More recently, the CIT has also been employed in sport coaching research to investigate interactions and power relations (Purdy et al., 2009; Purdy & Potrac, 2016; Purdy et al., 2008). Specifically, the critical incident technique has been widely espoused as an effective tool to support reflective practice,

[11] Given that the critical incident technique is concerned with both *identifying* and analysing relevant data, the analysis of critical incidents was inextricably linked with data collection (please see section 5.4.1). Here, rather than data collection and analysis existing as distinct 'phases' of the work, they were used interchangeably and iteratively.

professional judgement, and to investigate the effectiveness of practitioners' actions (Norman, Redfern, Tomalin, & Oliver, 1992; Tripp, 1993). Focusing on specific events which are embedded in their natural context also helps to provide close proximity and 'local groundedness' to the 'real life situation' (Angelides, 2001). Indeed, in coaching, Jones et al. (2016, p. 207) suggest that the CIT 'can provide a window through which we can view pedagogic behaviour in relation to a generally accepted aim (i.e. an object)'. The 'object' in this sense being the intended purpose or target of the activity (e.g., to improve performance). More closely, the CIT allows the identification and analysis of turning points whereby a practitioners' actions have in some way shaped (or not) subsequent interaction (Goodwin, 2001). For the present thesis, then, the CIT involved the selection and analysis of significant issues or key events (i.e., coaching practice and responses) which occurred throughout my time spent with the squad, and which helped to answer the research questions of *how*, *when*, *why*, and *under which circumstances* coaching practice had (or had not) influenced others in the context. Importantly, for an event to be 'significant' or critical it did not have to be revolutionary; as reflected in broader coaching work, there is a distinct need to focus on both mundane and extreme events (Purdy et al., 2008).

In recognition that different incidents may be interpreted as being critical (or not) by different stakeholders (Angelides, 2001; Bott & Tourish, 2016), critical incidents were selected by the researcher, coaches and athletes. Triangulating critical incidents in this way allowed data to be generated on specific events which were both high and low in terms of their occurrence and significance (to coaches and athletes) (Bott and Tourish, 2016). Incorporating the perspectives of a variety of stakeholders also helped to develop the rigour and quality of the research by enabling rich descriptions and explanations of the same/different event(s) to be generated (please see section 5.7 for more information). Footage of every session and match was coded, while making reference to my field notes (inclusive of casual conversations with athletes and coaches), and interview data, in order to log any incident whereby coaching practice was likely to have played a role in influencing (or not influencing) the actions of others (e.g., athletes, assistant coaches). As conducted by other scholars adopting a critical incident analysis approach (e.g., Angelides, 2001;

Edwards & Jones, 2018; Purdy et al., 2009; Purdy & Potrac, 2016; Purdy et al., 2008), incident by incident coding (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001; Tripp, 1993) was deemed to be relevant. This type of an approach permitted a deep exploration of specific incidents and their causal explanations, which traditional line by line coding (e.g., of interview transcripts alone) would have been incapable of achieving. This method also allowed me to uncover reoccurring episodes of (inter)action (Edwards & Jones, 2018), as well as episodes which may have been out of the ordinary (Bott & Tourish, 2016). For instance, I noticed the continual emphasis on, and endorsement/enforcement of batters batting for long periods (i.e., not playing recklessly), and bowlers bowling accurately (see section 6.3.2). Selection of these critical incidents, then, informed the choosing of cases for interview (please see section 5.2.1). Subsequently, incidents formed the crux of the semi-structured and stimulated recall interviews to explore how the *specific* event or action was perceived, what the athletes or coaches were thinking at the time of the incident, and how (previous) coaching practice may have played a role (or not) in influencing the observed action alongside other entities. At the start and end of these interviews, participants were also asked if there were any (other) specific critical incidents which they would like to review (in the footage) and discuss. Sometimes, the discussion of specific incidents in interviews prompted participants to recollect other connected incidents, which were then located and themselves discussed.

One key limitation of the CIT highlighted in previous work, is that participants often struggle to recall critical meaningful incidents (i.e., at the start of interviews), which can reduce the quality and rigour of the technique by limiting the scope, depth and focus of discussion (Angelides, 2001; Bott & Tourish, 2016). This was alleviated in the present thesis by: (a) incorporating the perspective of the researcher, coach and athlete when identifying critical incidents, (b) using the CIT alongside the stimulated recall technique (please see section 5.4.3) to enable participants to more accurately reflect upon and review critical incidents, and (c) through having casual conversations with stakeholders in the field to identify critical incidents 'in the moment', which could then be discussed at greater length in interviews. As such, this provides a novel

methodological contribution to the literature, which, it is hoped, might help researchers implementing the CIT in future studies.

Analysis of each critical incident was geared towards understanding causal mechanisms which helped to explain the specific event or occurrence (in line with critical realist emergent logic – please see section 4.4). For example, how could the behaviour be explained by (previous) (inter)action with others? *What*, *how*, *when*, *why* and *under which circumstances* had the (inter)actions of the coach been influential (or not) when explaining the (inter)actions of others (e.g., athletes)? In order to answer these questions, careful consideration of the role that theory played in the analysis was required. Here, Bott and Tourish (2016) valuably warned against empirical studies which set out to 'problematise' previous theory simply by spotting incidental gaps. Crucially, this 'gap spotting' approach often results in researchers 'shoehorning' findings into established frameworks, meaning that the explanatory power of the data set is subservient to pre-existing theory and thus limited in its capacity to shape, refine or generate (new) theory. Instead, the authors advocated that the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) could uncover emergent practices that 'do not fit into pre-existing schema, ultimately creating a space for fresh theory development' and 'shed new light on old phenomena' (Bott and Tourish, 2016: 27).

Commensurate with the CIT, no definitive theoretical position was adopted before the commencement of the present study. Rather than deductively 'shoehorning' data into a specific framework, I instead afforded the data an opportunity to provide explanatory power of its own accord. Importantly, however, I still remained cognisant of previous theory (Bott and Tourish, 2016). Here, theory (e.g., please see section 4.5) was carefully selected and utilised *throughout* the implementation of the study based upon its propensity to problematise, question or extend our understanding of (non)influence. Together, then, empirical data and iterative recourse to previous work provided an excellent means to both interrogate the fundamental assumptions of conventional theory, and to pave the way for fresh theoretical development. Specifically, in order to identify *how*, *when*, *why*, and *under which circumstances* coaching (inter)actions had been influential (or

not), data from multiple sources (i.e., field notes, video recording and interviews with multiple agents) were coded in an emic and etic manner (Layder, 1998; Tracy, 2013).

Initially, inductive thematic analysis was employed to (identify and) generate situational and contextual meaning around specific incidents (Bott and Tourish, 2016; Braun and Clarke, 2006). I remained *cognisant* of previous theory at this point, but did not implement it in a manner which stunted the identification of novel critical incidents in the dataset. A flexible theoretical framework (e.g., Jones and Wallace, 2005, Elder-Vass, 2007, 2010a, 2012a) was then adopted to generate (fallible) readings of the empirical material and challenge or develop conventional discourse about coaching. In this way, I reflexively and iteratively moved between data generated through multiple methods and interpretation in the light of theory (Charmaz, 2003). Importantly, data were allowed room to drive forward our understanding of coach (non)influence in this context, before being compared with existing literature to challenge conventional understanding, to provide new explanation of observed phenomena, and to consider fresh theoretical development. Together, this process of inductive and deductive analysis allowed me to identify (emergent) critical incidents and explain them in relation to previous (inter)action and theory. In other words, I was able to achieve retroductive and retrodictive understanding in line with the research questions. I moved 'from specific observations, through thematic conceptual categories, and on to a more causal analysis, going beyond the micro-interactions of social agents' (Rees & Gatenby, 2014, p. 147). If the analysis was grounded in (predominantly) inductive *or* deductive analysis, I would have been unable to incorporate accounts which helped to explain the behaviours and actions of agents in light of both their specific conscious reflexivity *and* dispositions (stored through interactions with members of norm circles and through making previous decisions).

I adopted a reflexive approach, aiming to be self-aware of my own theoretical predispositions and open to alternative theoretical positions (Bott and Tourish, 2016). Reflexivity was enabled through: a) the set-up of the CIT (incorporating multiple perspectives), b) the adoption of multiple methods, and c) by inviting critical friends and participants to offer thoughts and alternative explanations on the empirical data and associated theorising (Smith and McGannon,

2017). For participants, I explored how *practically adequate* the data and associated theorising was for them (i.e., how well it explained their situated experiences of physically being within the context and experiencing (non)influence). This then enabled the employment of judgmental rationality: I made an assessment of what I considered to be the most appropriate explanation and theorising of the empirical. Indeed, in this respect, I recognise that my readings/explanations of the data are inherently fallible and open to further or different (re)interpretation (Bhaskar, 1998 [1979])[12].

5.6 Generalisability

The possibility to generalise from research findings in qualitative work has long been debated (Larsson, 2009; Loy, 2015; Smith, 2018; Usher, 1996). Indeed, contemporary work in this area has suggested that many authors of qualitative research wrongly state that a limitation of their work is that findings cannot be generalised (Smith, 2018). Their claim would be true if, in referring to generalisability, authors meant statistical inference from a sample to a population of interest. However, qualitative research often operates on different grounds to this view of generalisability; it is (mostly) informed by different (sets of) ontological and epistemological assumptions. Generalisability within a qualitative piece of work typically relies on both the researcher *and* the reader; it often has *potential* for generalisability through careful consideration of transferability from one case to another (Smith, 2018). Importantly then, Smith (2018, p. 139) argued that those working within the qualitative domain have an obligation to ensure that the ontologies and epistemologies which underpin their work are made clear, and that they 'guide the process and product of qualitative research, including how generalisation is dealt with and communicated'.

Within an emergentist position of critical realism, which suggests that (social) events are multiply determined and contingent (Elder-Vass, 2010a), it is clear that the statistical probability approach to generalisability is again not applicable. When identifying entities, their causal relations, powers and mechanisms in a critical realist account it is important to renounce the view

[12] For a fuller explanation of rigour and quality, please see section 5.7.

that every single event or entity is determined by a completely new set of powers and relations. Indeed, many events/entities, albeit possessing the potential to be shaped by different sets of entities, powers and relations (or configurations of these relations), often have entities (and their associated mechanisms) which are more stable – these are known in critical realist circles as partial regularities, or demi-regularities (Lawson, 1997). For example, when returning to work from day to day, workers can reasonably expect certain conditions (e.g., hierarchical roles, role inhabitants or the values upon which an organisation operates) to remain the same. Clearly, these components *can* change, however, reflecting the name of *partial* regularities, as opposed to complete regularities. Resultantly, this logic provides a means through which generalisability is made possible. In supporting this claim, Easton (2010, p. 126) asserted that:

> generalisation of any kind is not possible unless there is some invariance in the world. If all events and their causes are unique then there could never be theories that work. And by unique I mean substantially and not trivially unique since in some sense every event in the world is unique.

In this regard, structures can remain (relatively) stable under particular transformation (Sayer, 1992). For example, when an individual leaves an organisation, the organisation can (often) continue to function and can indeed replace its members (Elder-Vass, 2010a).

Clearly, it is highly implausible to suggest that we are ever able to exhaustively identify every single causal factor which has contributed to and thus explains even a relatively simple social event (Elder-Vass, 2012a). However, what *is* important is to identify the most comprehensive, pertinent and practically adequate (fallible) explanations of entities/events possible (Elder-Vass, 2010a). Indeed, given this inherent uncertainty or fallibility and the contingent nature of events, we must consider the way in which (elements of) findings may remain stable or change across different contexts and time points when generalising. In attempting to generalise from findings of the present thesis, readers may wish to consider the causal theoretical explanation provided in terms of *how*, *when*, *why* and *under which circumstances* agents (inter)act in particular ways in light of coaching practice (or not) and the wider structural and agential entities at play. Furthermore, through critically

reflecting on the data presented, it is hoped that readers will be able to consider the complex nature of relations between coaching practice and its (non)influence on others. The theoretical framework and its alignment with the empirical evidence provides an avenue for analytical generalisability (Smith, 2018), whereby other researchers can confirm, refine or falsify this theory in other contexts. The reader may also consider naturalistic or representational generalisability (Smith, 2018), whereby data and its presentation can be read in terms of: does this account resonate with me and my practice (in a particular context)? For instance, coaches might be able to appreciate instances where their coaching practice has had a different (unintended) influence to that originally intended (e.g., see section 6.4.2). Alternatively, athletes may be able to read and appreciate the means through which they are able to consciously deliberate to act in light of conflicting pressures presented by different coaches (e.g., see section 6.7). To understand how the findings, theoretical interpretations and methodological contributions may apply to other contexts (or not), this requires careful considered reflection, as opposed to uncritical dogmatic acceptance or rejection.

5.7 Ensuring quality and rigour

Considerations of quality and rigour are essential to the implementation of any research design (Collier, 1994). Importantly, tools to work toward or measure quality and rigour in qualitative work should not be divorced from their philosophical underpinning (Smith & McGannon, 2018). The position of critical realism taken within the present work (that of an emergentist lens) views moderate social constructionism and realist ontology as being compatible (Elder-Vass, 2012a); this has important implications for adherence to procedures which develop quality and rigour. The realist position claims that entities *can* exist independently of our identification of them (Fleetwood, 2005). Similarly, some entities exist and depend upon our identification or construction of them. Knowledge itself, for example, is socially produced and shaped by power relations and normative institutions (Bhaskar, 2011; Elder-Vass, 2010a). For realists, then, multiple explanations and descriptions of the same phenomenon (epistemic relativism) are inherently available (Hammersley, 2004). However, the view that every explanation

is correct and equally valid in every instance – that 'there are no rational grounds for preferring one' view 'to another' – is rejected (Porter, 2007, p. 85).

The emergentist perspective adopted reinforces the need to consider both real causal powers and social construction in processes for quality and rigour. For instance, entities can be both real *and* socially constructed; the causal power to normatively influence is attributed to real groups of people, however, the beliefs which are held by individuals (often as dispositions) are dependent upon the interaction of people, and if these interactions were to change, producing alternative beliefs, the normative environment would be constructed differently (Elder-Vass, 2012a). Resultantly, the best way to measure quality and rigour from this approach is to ensure that research has sufficiently accounted for both real *and* socially constructed entities. In fact, we must firstly acknowledge that the very standards used to judge quality and rigour in qualitative research are themselves socially constructed. Tools or criteria for judging the quality of work do not exist 'out there', waiting to be discovered by us. The adoption, endorsement and enforcement of such tools which have been created by the academic community are causally influenced by (real) normative social structures (norm circles) and conscious reflexivity (Elder-Vass, 2012a).

Smith and McGannon (2017) provide a compelling critique of widely used tools for rigour and quality in qualitative work. Specifically, they critique member checking, inter-rater reliability and universal criteria on the basis that they are incompatible with an interpretivist approach to qualitative work. Firstly, member checking, popularised by Lincoln and Guba (1985), seeks to present data back to the research participant for them to identify whether the data are accurate and if they represent their views and experiences. According to this position, the validity of the account is therefore ensured if the participant confirms the account as a true record. In other words, it is viewed that the subjective bias of the researcher can be controlled for. Member checking, then, relies on what can be termed epistemological foundationalism. Smith and McGannon (2017) highlight this as being problematic because it presupposes that the process of member checking can be objective, neutral and unbiased. Specifically, the authors argue that this can never be the case because it is human agents who conduct the process of member checking, and human agents cannot

step outside of their historical experiences or theoretical preconceptions to objectively check the goodness of their data in relation to the phenomena of interest.

Secondly, inter-rater reliability (i.e., where the same data set is coded independently by different researchers and then compared for fit) was also critiqued by the authors on these same grounds. Different researchers will inherently be guided by their theoretical preconceptions (which they cannot step outside of) and hence these will shape the way in which they code the data set (Smith & McGannon, 2018). As such, trying to compare the coding of independent raters for similarity becomes problematic. Thirdly, the universal criteria – criteria which can be applied to judge the quality of *all* qualitative work (i.e., as proposed by Tracy, 2010) – approach is questioned because criteria for quality work are constructed by us (not 'out there' waiting to be found). Smith and McGannon (2017) therefore suggest that it is not possible for anyone to formulate a 'list' of criteria which determine the rigour and quality of all work. Further, adherence to the full list of criteria can sometimes be difficult (or indeed not necessary) to achieve in specific projects (Smith & McGannon, 2018).

The alternative – to combine epistemological constructionism and ontological realism – is also criticised on the basis that the former suggests that we cannot step outside of our theoretical preconceptions, while the latter implies that entities exist independently to us and hence we need to be able to step outside of our subjective preconceptions to know about them (Smith & McGannon, 2018). This criticism cannot be held to devalue the ontological and epistemological position put forward in the present thesis, however. Ronkainen and Wiltshire (2019) argue that realists *do not* (need to be able to) make ontological statements that are *theory free*. In fact, statements made by realists 'are precisely and explicitly theoretical, but the objects to which those theories refer have an existence beyond researchers' mere "internal" mind-dependent constructions' (Ronkainen & Wiltshire, 2019, p. 9). Theory free knowledge is not the same as ontological realism. In other words, while realists would recognise entities as being capable of existing independently to us (or our ability to identify them) as agents, few would claim that we are able to step outside of our theoretical preconceptions or knowledge to know about them – hence the recognition of knowledge

as being fallible. The objective in the present thesis was not explicitly to identify or create theory-free knowledge about entities which exist completely independently to us (although some entities can be seen to exist independently to us – i.e., planetary movement). The aim was instead to identify social reality and its (non)influence (theoretically) which can but does not always exist completely independently to our *identification* of it. In view of the double hermeneutic, we play a role in constructing social reality, but social reality is also real; it exists and can causally influence us (Elder-Vass, 2010a). If there is no way to recognise a reality which can exist independently to our identification of it, there is no way to accurately theorise the influence of social structure on our action – we, ourselves, do not construct nor control the entirety or existence of social structure that causally influences us as individuals (Elder-Vass, 2010a). Racism, for example, can affect opportunities for individuals, which often lies outside of the control of the agent who is experiencing racism (Manicas, 1998).

Critical realism acknowledges that knowledge must always remain fallible and open to revision or reinterpretation (Bhaskar, 1975). This does not mean that we cannot move closer toward a plausible understanding of reality. We therefore require approaches which allow us to progress knowledge claims and include subjective positions, while accounting for their empirical adequacy, ontological plausibility and potential contribution to explanation (Ronkainen & Wiltshire, 2019). The discussion of researchers, participants and other stakeholders (e.g., through critical friends and member reflections; Smith and McGannon, 2017) can indeed progress our knowledge of entities (Smith & Elger, 2014) and how they operate. Accounting for the double hermeneutic here is important; we both shape and are shaped by social structure. There is a need to be both reflexive (understand our influence on the research process as the researcher and how our actions themselves have been shaped), and to meaningfully progress our (causal) understanding of entities. In referring to quality work within realist ethnography, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 16) appreciate that ethnographies are socially constructed, however, they continue:

> we can work with what 'knowledge' we have, while recognizing [sic] that it may be erroneous and engaging in systematic inquiry where doubt seems justified; and in doing so we can still make the reasonable assumption that we are trying to describe

> phenomena as they are, and not merely how we perceive them or how we would like them to be.

Proposing an account of the causal power of social structures, as Elder-Vass has done, is itself an attempt to explain or theorise entities and their influence at the level of the real. While, clearly, this was likely to be influenced by the authors' theoretical preconceptions (i.e., critical realism and emergentism) this is not to say that we cannot reasonably assume that this (more or less) adequately explains the phenomena of interest while recognising its fallibility. The process of judgmental rationality is important here (Archer, Bhaskar, Collier, Lawson, & Norrie, 1998; Danermark et al., 1997). The purpose of judgmental rationality is to prevent the collapse of ontological realism into epistemic relativism or vice versa. This involves abduction or inference to the best possible explanation (developed through our empirical engagement with the material world) and provides a means through which one account can be viewed as more or less adequate than another in terms of its ability to explain phenomena (Groff, 2000). Critical discussion among the research community and their participants forms a method upon which this can be advanced. The quality of a critical realist account (for social sciences) can also be judged in terms of how closely it follows the logic of data analysis which must be in line with the ontological position adopted (i.e., how things exist). Because events are capable of being multiply determined:

> [t]he four stages in the explanation of an open-systemic event may therefore be summarized [sic] as follows: (i) causal *analysis* (or resolution) of the event; (ii) theoretical *redescription* of the component causes; (iii) *retrodiction* via normic statements to possible causes of the components; (iv) *elimination* of alternative causes (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 125).

Elder-Vass (2010a) later provided a more detailed set of assumptions upon which high quality realist work can be developed. Indeed, Rees and Gatenby (2014) refer to Elder-Vass' proposals as the 'holy grail' of critical realist social research. Specifically, Elder-Vass (2010a, p. 69) suggested that it is incumbent upon social scientists operating within this approach to identify:

- 'the particular types of *entities* that constitute the objects of the discipline;

- the *parts* of each type of entity and the sets of *relations* between them that are required to constitute them into this type of entity;
- the *emergent properties* or *causal powers* of each type of entity;
- the *mechanisms* through which their parts and the characteristic relations between them produce the emergent properties of the wholes;
- the *morphogenetic causes* that bring each type of entity into existence;
- the *morphostatic causes* that sustain their existence;
- and the ways that these sorts of entities, with their properties, *interact to cause the events* we seek to explain in the discipline'.

Alongside these proposals, Pawson, Boaz, Grayson, Long, and Barnes (2003) developed the TAPUPAS tool through which the quality of critical realist research can be judged. The quality of the present thesis can thus also be assessed in terms of these additional criteria:

- Transparency: are the reasons for the research, its philosophical approach, questions, aims, objectives and methods made clear, and is the process by which knowledge has been created open to be scrutinised (please refer to Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5)?
- Accuracy: are claims made based on relevant evidence and information (please refer to Chapter 6)?
- Purposivity: are the methodology and methods appropriate to address the research questions and are they fit for purpose (please refer to Chapter 5)?
- Utility: are the research questions answered in a way which is appropriate for use by practitioners in the field; does it provide information which can inform practice (please refer to Chapters 6 and 7)?
- Propriety: has the research been designed and implemented in a legal and ethical manner (please refer to Chapter 5)?

- Accessibility: is the research capable of being presented in a way which is accessible to stakeholders of interest (please refer to Chapter 6[13])?
- Specificity: does the research meet the quality standards already used for knowledge of this nature; does it reach source specific standards (please refer to Chapters 5 and 6)?

In sum, the quality and rigour of realist work can be assessed by understanding: a) how empirically adequate the research account is (e.g., have data been recorded accurately and have sufficient observational data been gathered to support claims made?), b) how ontologically plausible the research account is (e.g., how well does the research engage with theoretical explanation of the evidence; how well is context and complexity accounted for; and how have competing explanations been considered?), and c) how much practical utility the research account has (e.g., how well do the claims made guide or resonate with practical action in the real world?) (Ronkainen & Wiltshire, 2019).

5.8 Conclusion

In this methodology chapter I have provided further justification for the use of ethnography as a social practice to address the research questions. In relation to the sampling and choosing of participants, I have outlined a realist approach (Emmel, 2013), which permitted scope to generate rich, contextual accounts. Thereafter, I have introduced the process by which I gained access to the context, and, importantly, strategies which I employed to maintain access to the environment through considering the influence of norm circles (Elder-Vass, 2012a). Alongside this, I have provided a reflexive exploration of my position as a researcher and how this may have influenced the research process, before introducing the specific squad and its members. After this, I have outlined the methodological bricolage which was employed to understand the (non)influence of coaching practice and how data collected through these means were analysed in line with a critical realist framework. Finally, I critically considered the potential for findings to be generalised, and

[13] Findings have also been disseminated at conference presentations and continued professional development opportunities for coaches and athletes.

explored tools through which the value, quality and rigour of the work can be judged. Within Chapter 6, I present findings from the ethnography, critically discussing and explaining specific social events (critical incidents) in reference to the theoretical framework and wider associated theory in order to answer the central research questions.

Chapter 6: Findings and discussion

'It is essential to grasp why iterative changes in the coaching situation are rather unmanageable, and to show how it is possible to cope with such changes within the given structural limits. Once actors come to understand the origins of patterned behaviour that constitute social structures like the organisational arrangements surrounding coaching activity, they come to recognise their place in contributing to such pattern'

(Jones & Wallace, 2005, p. 124)

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section is to critically discuss *how*, *when*, *why*, and *under which circumstances* coaches influence (or do not influence) others (e.g., athletes). Specifically, using an emergentist perspective, this chapter aims to illuminate interactions between coaches and athletes, and how such (inter)action both shaped and was shaped by social structure, alongside the capacity for agents to consciously think before acting. Indeed, the present research highlights the relationships between individuals and social norms in the environment studied, helping to elucidate the influence of these norms and their associated (inter)actions to explain specific events (e.g., athlete performance).

Given that coaches often assume their practice is influential, but struggle to articulate how this influence is actually operationalised (McCallister et al., 2000), this research provides an important and novel contribution to the literature, which is capable of supporting the development of practitioners. In one of the interviews conducted as part of the present research, Douglas, the team manager, echoed the need for work which is capable of supporting coaches in understanding more about the influence that they (do or do not) have:

> I think last year, having a clear plan of what we were gonna [going to] do in the two-day Championship games, I think… that had quite a significant impact, and, and… and I think the way we prepare them [players] for the games as well, has quite a significant impact. But I have *no idea* how you would quantify that, at all. I think without what we did, we wouldn't have won the Championship, erm – if you just had somebody that was taking them to the games and looking after them and stuff like that – I don't think we would have [won the Championship], no, I think that what was *said* during, before and after those games *had an impact* and helped us to win. I don't think we would have won without that, but I couldn't quantify, I have *no idea* – I think you might get more answers from the kids that will help you with that, than from the coaches, yeah – because ultimately… they won the Championship, they were on the

> field, we weren't on the field, you know. But err, certainly there were moments where we looked as if we were not gonna follow the game plan, and then in a drinks break or something like that, we went out, spoke to, you know spoke to [the players] and it improved, you know, that next session was much better… How do you measure that? I don't know. Anyway.
>
> Semi-structured interview with Douglas (4th February 2018)

Addressing the aims of this research, and in keeping with an emergentist approach (Elder-Vass, 2010a), this section first identifies entities of the organisation studied (i.e., its parts – people) and the relations between them (i.e., their specialised roles and authority relations), before introducing the central norms which were established and endorsed/enforced in the context and how it was possible for these norms to influence action. Thereafter, specific critical incidents (events) are elucidated whereby coaching practice was found to have had (or not had) an influence on others. Indeed, the role of both social structure (norm circles) and conscious reflexivity (among other entities) in shaping this (non)influence is considered. In doing so, an increasingly complex picture of coaching practice and its (non)influence is developed from the start to the finish of the *Findings and discussion* chapter. For the reader, it is hoped that the organisation of this section of the thesis provides an opportunity to initially understand the context of the research in terms of who was there, how they (inter)acted and what influenced their courses of (inter)action, before more sophisticated readings of specific sedimented cases are offered. The overarching aim of this chapter, then, is to explain and situate the micro-level (inter)actions of social agents within rich explanation of the way in which social discourses and practices 'arise out of the interaction between agency and structure in a particular material context' (Crinson, 2001, p. 13).

6.2 Specialised roles and authority relations

In line with Elder-Vass' (2010a) claim that it is first necessary to identify types of entity, their parts and the relations between them, this section provides an insight into who the key actors of the organisation studied were and how they were related to one another.

6.2.1 *Everyday mundane acts and their entwinement in leader relations*

As introduced in *Chapter 5*, the squad was comprised of one head coach (David), one assistant coach (Sam), one team manager (Douglas), one strength and conditioning intern (Omar)

and 26 cricketers. While Douglas and Sam had been working with the squad for a number of years, David had come in as head coach of the squad the season before the present study began. Omar was in his first season with the squad and had played in the same squad himself as a junior cricketer. Players had been involved in the squad for between one and three years or were new to the squad for the season studied. Indeed, from the very first interaction I observed upon commencement of the first training session, it was evident that certain distinctions could be made between actors and their positions within the organisational structure. This included the enactment of different role norms influenced through previous interaction and power relations (Elder-Vass, 2012a):

> Upon entering the indoor cricket centre, players mingle in small groups, catching up with one another after having had some time off during the closed season. Some players who are new to the squad for this season stand close by to each other, nervously fidgeting with their stance and clothing (appearing to be trying to 'fit in'). Douglas walks around – clipboard in hand – registering players for the session and checking that all contact and medical information is up to date. David, Sam and I stand a short distance away from the players, while the two coaches discuss the content of the session ahead. After signing in all of the players, Douglas joins us. David walks towards the players.
>
> *David:* 'Right, okay then fellas'.
>
> Players turn around from their respective conversations and form a horse shoe with David placed directly in the centre, facing the squad. Douglas and Sam move to stand to the side of David, also facing the players. Players and coaches listen intently while David welcomes the squad and briefs them on the programme of training and the session ahead.
>
> After briefing the players, David asks the players to head for a jog around the hall, to 'stretch off' and 'get loose'. While players conform to this request, David begins to set out cones for the warm-up activity. He turns to Sam and Douglas
>
> *David:* 'I need, I just need a ball on each of these cones – just this line'
>
> *Douglas:* 'You need a ball-'
>
> *David:* 'Aye, please'
>
> Douglas and Sam both immediately turn and head to the bag of balls, before placing one on each of the cones, as requested.
>
> *David [addressing the players]:* 'Right, fellas – find a cone'
>
> Players all head toward a cone and stand next to it. After David has explained the catching activity to the players, he notices that Omar (the strength and conditioning coach) has turned up to the session late. One of the players (Maurice) does not have a partner to work with in the warm-up.
>
> *David:* 'Omar, redeem yourself. [You can work with] Maurice'.

Field note extract (14 January 2018)

From my observations of these initial (inter)actions, I began to understand more about the roles of coaches and players within the squad. Importantly, role titles alone do not provide an individual with the status or power to act in that specific capacity; it is often also how others reciprocally interpret roles and afford power to individuals that allows them to take up that role (Denison, 2010; Potrac et al., 2002). For example, this was evident in interviews with players, who described their perceptions of the coaches' roles (please see section 6.2.2). Indeed, in the abovementioned events, the players and coaches retained sufficient agency to act against the requests made by the head coach, David, however, nobody chose to do so[14]. For instance, when David asked players to stretch off and find a cone, and when he asked the coaches to assist in placing balls on top of cones for the warm-up, both groups complied with his requests despite retaining the agency to act otherwise.

This set of relationships and the roles both afforded to and adopted by individuals, here, were not simply created on the spot. They were shaped by a complex set of historical interactions (Jones & Wallace, 2006). These included the way in which coaches and athletes who had been part of the squad previously had (inter)acted, as well as how athletes who were new to the squad had previously learned norms and conventions for (inter)acting with coaches through their engagement in other sporting squads (Cushion & Jones, 2006). For example, Alan, one of the players, alluded to his expectations for the role norms of coaches and how he should respond as a player:

> And if they [coaches] have… knowledge in the bit that they are saying, like yeah I would listen to them… I don't really know… just, well, coaches just give you advice to make you better don't they, so you just try to listen to them.
>
> Semi-structured interview with Alan (30th August 2018)

These findings resonate with the work of Potrac et al. (2002), who reported that social role, power and self-presentation are inextricably interlinked and embedded within coaches' and athletes'

[14] Throughout this chapter more detailed and intricate examples of conformity and resistance to coaching practice are introduced (e.g., please see section 6.7). The purpose of this section is to illustrate the broad power relations and roles played by different individuals in the context.

everyday (inter)actions. Even subtleties of the way in which David, Sam, and Douglas stood in relation to the players and one another denoted the different roles played by various individuals. When the three coaches addressed the squad, as mentioned above, they stood together a short distance away from the players (who had formed a horseshoe) to listen in to the content. Although wearing the same clothing as the players, the positions in which they stood and the general age difference between themselves and the athletes meant that the coaches were instantly recognisable.

David, in addressing the players first, standing at the centre of the horse shoe, asking Sam and Douglas to place out the balls, requesting that players stood next to a cone, and attempting to publicly shame Omar for turning up late underlined that he was the 'leader' of the squad. These 'claims for status' as a leader were accepted by players and colleagues alike by listening, attentively tending to, and conforming with the requests made (Tourish, 2019). Many studies in coaching, to date, have focused on 'big' important moments or behaviours associated with a strong (perceived) influence on athletes (e.g., Barker-Ruchti & Tinning, 2010; Chelladurai, 1984; Chelladurai & Carron, 1983; Claringbould et al., 2015; Denison, 2007; Purdy et al., 2008; Purdy & Jones, 2011; Reinboth & Duda, 2006; Sarrazin et al., 2002; Smith et al., 1978). In contrast to these important examinations of more grandiose coaching acts, what the present data instead elucidates is an example of everyday coaching (inter)action, which responds to the call for more investigation into 'small and even mundane acts whereby leaders perform leadership and seek legitimacy' (Tourish, 2019, p. 233). Indeed, investigation of how leaders and followers come to understand their own and others' roles is important because organisations can be demarcated from other social forms (i.e., interaction groups or associations) on the basis that they are imbued with *specialised roles* and *authority relations* which potentially make them more powerful than simpler associations (Elder-Vass, 2010a). In this regard, people are the parts of organisations and roles help to define the relations between them.

David was the only member of the coaching staff who was employed full-time by the cricket board. Sam and Douglas were employed on a casual contract. Sam held another job away from his coaching, while Douglas was retired from his other career. As the leader of the squad and overall

pathway programme (all junior county teams), David interpreted his role to encompass the provision of strategic direction, while maintaining effective relationships and buy-in from his colleagues:

> Absolutely, so [my] main duties include managing staff, so I see it as two pathways. I see a pathway for the players on one side and a pathway to support the coaches as well, so because we are a small county we are relying on a small number of good people to provide the majority of our programmes. Erm, all of those people have different skills so it's my job really to manage them to try and get them to a level that I think is acceptable so then they can do that, so then they can… having [have] a relationship and an ability to improve the players because it's very easy at times to neglect the coaches and focus on the players. But the players are never going to get any better if the, the coaching they have access to isn't of the necessary standard really… So that's kind of what I see the role at the minute. Erm, so yeah it's managing the hall space, the coaches that do the specific age groups, err, getting the coaches to understand what they have to deliver and what you know, fundamental skills that we would like the kids to have when they go through their age groups. You know, managing with them [coaches] the game programme, the practice programme… Well I think the first thing I need to get, that I… in the role that I'm doing now, is the other coaches, so the relationship with the other coaches is absolutely vital… … Firstly, because I don't need to like them all, and I don't like them all, but I need them to like me and I need to get them to understand what I, what we're trying to achieve, because it's not about me, it's not about them, it's about us… doing the best we can with the players that we have available and making the most of the resources that we haven't got a lot of the time.
>
> Semi-structured interview with David (10th November 2017)

This excerpt from David refers to the orchestration (i.e., developing relationships, understanding, and opportunities to upskill the coaching workforce) that he felt was a necessary feature of his role, in order to work within the prevailing pathos (i.e., the fact that his goals for player development might not be achievable as a result of the limited resources available, or because his coaching team might otherwise have been unable to deliver coaching of the 'necessary standard'; Jones & Wallace, 2005). Within this relational network, and through David's role as head coach, he attempted to create a 'central coordinative system' (March & Simon, 1993, p. 23) whereby coaches and athletes understood their roles in contributing to the overall aims of the organisation - to develop cricketing performance:

> Erm, getting them, you know players performing to their ability, in my eyes, like we don't get… it's not professional sports, we ain't judged on results all the time, whereas success is winning games if you're a Premier League manager or a county [professional domestic cricket] coach. Whereas, for me it's being able to get the players to be successful and then getting them… giving them the foundations to build… to play to the next level, and really success to me would be… if I have 13

> under 17's this year, success to me would be for them all to keep playing and for them all to be… for them to be… have improved between January and August and then wanting… having that desire and that hunger and that… you know, to, to get better, to want to keep on improving, instead of just thinking well that's the end of my county age group career

Semi-structured interview with David (13th December 2017)

In further refining the organisation's capacity to achieve such aims, David had a clear vision for the role of the assistant coach (Sam) and the team manager (Douglas) who worked under him:

> Sam is more of like an Assistant Coach, Sam is like erm, I'll ask him to do something he'll do it, if he wants to lead something, he'll lead, but he's no good at anything else, so he's actually good being there, he offers a little bit. [He] didn't offer loads [last season], but I think it's because he knew that I was there to take the lead, so he didn't want to get involved too much, which I think will have been a change for him, but I think it was something that, well he said he was quite happy to do it. Erm, but other than that he doesn't really offer anything else, he's, he's not a very good organiser, he's not, so you know, he's good, he's good on the floor, being there, he's very reliable in terms of he'll be there when he says he's going to be there, but in terms of admin, in terms of organisation erm, you cannit really have him doing any of that. So between the three of us we work, we work fairly well.

Semi-structured interview with David (10th November 2017)

> Douglas is more Manager, so Douglas'll drive the minibus, he'll organise the fixtures and the venues, erm, he'll do the, he'll do all the paperwork with XXXXX [County Cricket Board Administrator] and the… the health and safety stuff. He'll have all the details of the players… He's the perfect person to have for me really because he does all the stuff that I'm no good at so, he's an ex-school teacher, very organised, knows the score, can do it fairly simply, has a good relationship with the players, lovely bloke, good to spend time with. Erm, so there's not a problem there, we work well, we work together very well.

Semi-structured interview with David (10th November 2017)

Here, David referred to the roles which he had ascribed to Sam and Douglas. In his eyes, Sam's role was primarily to *support* and lead on specific elements of sessions or coaching activities when asked to by David, whereas Douglas' role was more administrative – to coordinate travel, paperwork, and match arrangements, for example, while contributing to coaching activities if required. It was apparent across these excerpts and from my time spent in the field (as referenced throughout section 6.2.1) that David was the coach 'in charge'. Interestingly, David referred to the trust which he afforded (or did not afford) to Sam and Douglas. Specifically, David trusted Sam and Douglas to run drill-based activities or to administrate, respectively, but he felt that the levels of knowledge and understanding that they possessed were not to the same degree as his own:

> as a lead coach, as somebody that is in there, with the two guys that are there, Sam, Sam is good, Sam was excellent last night. Douglas has got the knowledge he has, but I don't think they've got the under- the same level of understanding and knowledge as I have, so that means that you can't trust what they say all the time. They've got the right intention, but I feel as though I've got to do it all, for them to make- for them to understand and for that to make a difference. Erm… whether or not that's right or not, again I don't know, you can trust them to run a- you can trust them to run a drill, and you can trust them to do things, that I probably wouldn't do, erm, in terms of the variation in the fielding session there, but, there's sometimes I try, I might go out the hall, or I might do something else because I'm worried in case it's gonna be really shit, but I need to give them that responsibility, you know what I mean, erm, and that's just because my standards are so high.
>
> Stimulated recall interview with David (26th January 2018)

Some of this (dis)trust appeared to be derived from David's previous (inter)actions with the coaches. For example, when discussing methods which could be utilised to develop the performance of cricketers in their squad, David highlighted to me that he sometimes disagreed with Sam's observations:

> So I don't, I don't think coaches should ever say something just for the sake of saying something, it has to be relevant and meaningful, and it has to be something that you're able to clarify and understand yourself. You know get into a rhythm, and you know, and it's like what the fuck, you know, what does that mean? You know, this bowler might have the most mechanical, unrhythmical approach and action in the world, so how do you get into a rhythm? Like XXXXX XXXXXX's [player from last year's squad], you know Sam [Assistant Coach] always used to say to me, he needs to get into a rhythm. It's like, mate, he's got the most mechanical, fucking weird looking action in the world… rhythm is not part of what he does, so again, it's counterproductive saying something like that… Erm… that's just an example for, that's something that's stuck in my head from last year.
>
> Semi-structured interview with David (13th December 2017)

When discussing his perceptions of Douglas' reputation, David alluded to the fact that he felt Douglas was a good organiser and administrator, but that he lacked skills in being able to condense his observations into coaching conversations. After making judgement on Sam and Douglas' ability to coach, this was one of the primary reasons in which David took over as head coach of the under 17 team:

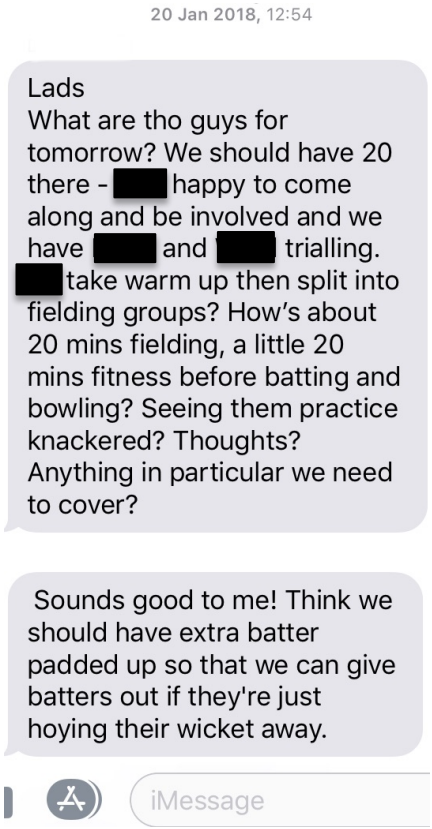
> Douglas and Sam help me. So they've kind of ran the programme the last 5 or 6 years I think alongside XXXXX XXXXXX [a previous coach who has since retired from the pathway] who kind of faded away because of his involvement with the Minor Counties team, but erm, I've kind of come in, I've kind of led it from the front really because I felt as though it needed to. They [Sam and Douglas] struggled 2 years ago and I think it was because we didn't really support them. XXXXXX [previous coach, now retired] was away, his daughter got married, so then Douglas was left at games by

> himself. Douglas is a good manager, he's a good organiser, but he aint a, you know he's not the coach that the players respect at that age, so he'll make his notes and he'll make his speeches, they go on too long and the kids'll just switch off, especially if you've been bowled out twice in a day at XXXXXXX [ground] on the flattest pitch in XXXXXXXXX [county], do you know what I mean so. Like last year the same group went from being bowled out twice against XXXXXXX [opposition team] at XXXXXXX [ground] to scoring 400 in a day at XXXXXXX [another ground], do you know what I mean, so, the sort of leadership skills that I brung to the group obviously worked because we won the league and we won every game, well, we drew one and won the other 3 on first-innings. Erm… cos the lads had a bit of focus.
>
> Semi-structured interview with David (10th November 2017)

David's reading of Sam and Douglas' coaching capabilities shaped his decisions in ascribing Sam and Douglas their specific roles. In contrast to the work of Readdy et al. (2016), who reported that head coaches in their study perceived the contribution of assistant coaches positively and orchestrated by empowering and delegating, the present findings highlight orchestration in a different light. David remained somewhat sceptical of Sam and Douglas' ability to coach independently. Indeed, he viewed this as a potential source of ambiguity or pathos in that Sam and Douglas' contributions could act against or prevent him from achieving his own goals as head coach of the squad.

Whilst Purdy et al. (2008) highlighted how (dis)trust can be influenced by previous interactions in coach-athlete relations (i.e., not being open and honest in communication can lead to a breakdown in trust), few studies have explored these concepts in coach-coach relations as part of a coaching team. Among the limited pool of work which has explored (dis)trust in coach-coach relations, Purdy, Potrac, and Nelson (2013) usefully drew upon the sociological theory of Sztompka (1999) to highlight that trust afforded to other coaches is measured in terms of whether or not actions align with expected desires and objectives for performance. Specifically, according to Sztompka (1999), how we read the reputation, performance and appearance of others contributes toward the levels of trust we afford to individuals. Indeed, after the actions of Douglas and Sam were incongruent with David's initial expectations (i.e., of how to work on a player's technique in Sam's case, and Douglas' inability to gain respect from players on coaching matters), David felt uneasy in giving his colleagues more responsibility to lead on coaching activities. Nonetheless, in order to maintain working relationships and provide opportunities for his colleagues to develop, he

felt that it was a necessary feature of his role to give his team manager and assistant coach *some* responsibility. For instance, before the second indoor session, David messaged the coaching team (through a messaging platform in which I had been included) to gather their thoughts on the plan for the session:



Here, David had sought the opinion of Sam and Douglas on the session which was to be delivered, and had ascribed specific roles for delivery. Given the levels of (dis)trust that David afforded to his coaching team, the fact that he continued to consult them to provide their opinion presented an interesting finding. In light of this, David explained that, given the limited resources available to him and the fact that the running of the county pathway programme was dependent upon a dwindling number of dedicated coaches, building relationships with his coaching staff and getting them to 'like him' (i.e., through providing more opportunities for them to have an input) was important to ensure continued player development. It would appear that David had developed a sense of micropolitical literacy (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a) in relation to his socio-professional interests within the organisation, through understanding the importance of the role played by others

(i.e., other coaches) in allowing him to operationalise (or not) his plans for player development (Huggan, Nelson, & Potrac, 2015):

> Upon meeting David for coffee to discuss the research project, and to obtain more detailed information on the composition of the county pathway programme, David made it clear that the running of the pathway was dependent upon the time and effort given by a small number of willing and dedicated coaches. David stated that he was keen to ensure that these coaches were not 'pissed off', because if this was to happen and one of the integral members of coaching staff were to leave, the running of the whole county pathway programme would be in jeopardy.
>
> Field notes from initial informal meeting with David (26th September, 2017)

> I get really fidgety when I'm not leading stuff… I'm walking round thinking, or I'm sitting down, I'm thinking, this doesn't look very good sitting down, I'm bored, like, we go, you know, we want to be doing, I need to be doing stuff, but I know that I cannit do that [lead on coaching activities] all the time, so it's something that I've learned. Instead of taking over and saying right I'm going to do this every single week, it's kind of like knowing when to do it and when to sit back… and finding, making sure that other people [coaches] have got, get the opportunity to shine and improve their skills instead of just being all about me.
>
> Semi-structured interview with David (10th November, 2017)

David's delegation of coaching activities to Sam and Douglas was often managed in a manner which saw David maintain oversight and control the purpose of the activity. For instance, in the session referred to in the text message above, as Sam was taking an activity that he had been assigned to deliver, David intervened to maintain oversight of the players' performance:

> Sam is leading on a fielding activity which he has been designated to deliver. After he has explained what is required, players are moving at pace, picking a ball up from a cone, before throwing it in to the wicket-keeper, receiving the ball back, and then racing other players to get back to the original cone as fast as they can. Sometime into the activity David appears to be frustrated with the performances of some of the players and intervenes.
>
> *David:* 'Sam, can I just duck in?'
>
> Without waiting for a response from Sam, David continues anyway:
>
> *David:* 'Right, lads, work really hard on what you're doing when you are taking off. Right… try not to have your weight going back. So, Winston – I watched you there – you were like this [demonstrates being flat-footed]. He [Sam] said 'go', and you've kind of like rocked back and then pushed off your back leg, instead of just going forward with your front leg. So, let's be really, really careful about what we are trying to do. If we say go, we've got to go – right – we can't afford to have our weight going back. Push off that front foot'.
>
> *Field note extract (21 January 2018)*

This resonates with the work of Santos et al. (2013) who reported that coaches orchestrate by attempting to make their staff feel connected through providing a 'sense' of responsibility and

ownership whilst maintaining overall direction of coaching activities. In particular, it highlights the micro-political action engaged in by David to establish a greater sense of loyalty from those working with him, whilst remaining in the driving seat and steering the focus of the programme (Kelchtermans, 2005). David's offer of input appeared to constitute a form of exchange which helped him to offset the potentially negative consequences of his desire to have freedom to take the lead on coaching activities where he felt the need to do so. Where previous work has highlighted that head coaches 'stepping in' to take the lead on their coaching colleagues' sessions can have negative influences and make the coach in question feel redundant or sidelined (Potrac et al., 2012), this did not appear to be the case in the present study. Indeed, the lead of the activity was handed back over to Sam when David had finished speaking, and the content of David's talk was about player performance rather than the set-up of Sam's drill. Perhaps the embarrassment or feeling of uselessness evident in Potrac and colleagues' study was also alleviated in the present case, through Sam understanding that David's intervention was done with collegial, supportive intentions (evidenced through Sam's perceived relationship with David highlighted in section 6.2.2), as opposed to being an act to undermine or demonstrate superiority over him. By intervening to increase the intensity of the activity, David had 'stepped in' to Sam's session, using expert and legitimate power forms to achieve his desired ends (French & Raven, 1959; Potrac et al., 2012). He had acted in an attempt to manage some of the pathos present in that his goals for player development and performance did not appear to be met in a session being led by Sam.

Sam had afforded (expert and legitimate) power to David in this respect, allowing him to step into the activity which he was delivering, as a result of his perceptions of David's role and knowledge:

> David has fetched that organisation bit into [the squad]…, from the way the game is advancing and stuff like he has fetched from his Level 4 [coaching award], so I am learning from him. He's [David] the head coach. He's the main man really, so when he's, you kna, some of the stuff that he fetches in, you kna, we have to learn, we have to play to that. That's our game plans and stuff, we try to stick to them and they've been – to be perfectly honest – last year they were brilliant. Very simple, but very, very structured and that's how we won the league, to be fair. We just, having them little game plans and his little chats – at the drinks breaks and at lunch – you kna, particularly when we were batting.

Semi-structured interview with Sam (22nd March 2018)

Although orchestrative actions to generate an illusion of empowerment have been recognised in previous work (i.e., Santos et al., 2013), this has largely explored what coaches think they do in practice through semi-structured interviews. This is the first study to the authors' knowledge that highlights an empirical in-situ example of how orchestration is manifest in the influence of coaches' (inter)actions. These findings are therefore important in furthering our understanding of how coaches influence others. Specifically, unique insights are provided on how coach-coach (dis)trust can play a part in shaping the roles played by different coaches, which can, in turn, shape how coaches are able to influence (or not) athletes. Indeed, as will be discussed further in the following section, it could be said that the interactions and relations between entities (e.g., head coach, assistant coach, team manager, and athletes) created an emergent property of the norm circle(s) to produce a tendency for those in roles (e.g. coaches in different roles) to act in particular ways. Through their interactions and relations, role incumbents stored dispositions or beliefs about what was considered to be normal role performance. Further, the emergent property of the organisation as a whole (to perform well) required both normative mechanisms (e.g., developed through interactions highlighted above) to regulate the role performances of individuals, and non-normative mechanisms (i.e., the coordinated interaction of those in different roles who perform together) (Elder-Vass, 2010a).

6.2.2 *Roles and relations of coaches and athletes*

Although David, Sam and Douglas were all contractually bound to the cricket board formal code of conduct (Appendix 2), the enactment of their stipulated duties and more informal role specifications were strongly defined and influenced by the expectations that other members had of role incumbents and how these incumbents interacted (Elder-Vass, 2010a). For instance, as depicted in the interview excerpts below, the position of David in overall charge of the squad appeared to be reciprocally appreciated by both Sam and Douglas. Importantly, the agency of others plays a significant role in the acceptance, development and maintenance of leader identity (DeRue & Ashford, 2010; Potrac, Mallett, et al., 2017). Hence, although these responsibilities were

never put in explicit or formal terms, Sam, Douglas and David appeared to be able to sufficiently read, through (inter)actions with others, both their own and others' role norms. As outlined in section 6.2.1, this sense had been developed and refined over a number of seasons together. For instance, Douglas referred to his perceptions of the roles of coaches, and provided examples of how and when these roles were enacted:

> I felt that between the three of us, we all knew our roles within the squad and who was doing what. I mean, I let David lead it – and so did Sam to be fair – we let David lead it, but then he does value our opinion, you know, he lets me go [and work] with the fast bowlers, with the seam bowlers, he doesn't erm, interfere much. He just sort of says this is what I want the fast bowlers to do, so he sets the scene, and then he leaves it up to me to talk to them, and err, work with them and err, yeah I think, I think that within the set-up – within the three of us – we work well together, yeah.
>
> Often David will say right Sam, I want you to go out and do the [team] talk, you know at drinks or something like that. Or, if we are fielding he might, he might often send me out to do that and say right – get the bowlers, you know, we need to do this, that and the other and then he will let me go out and talk… David is *very*, *very* much the, the lead pathway coach for the 17's and I am one of the support staff if you like, I don't know how you, but it works well, it works well in that, so.
>
> Semi-structured interview with Douglas (4th February 2018)

These excerpts from Douglas suggest that he felt as if he had a 'sense' of responsibility. This appeared to exist as an illusion of empowerment (Jones & Standage, 2006). While Douglas felt that his opinion was valued by the head coach, his contributions were often steered, or shaped by David (e.g., where David instructed Douglas in relation to what he wanted the bowlers to do, before allowing him to go and work with that specific group of players). It would appear that, through interactions (e.g., with David) over time and consciously reflecting before making decisions (e.g., to 'let' David lead on activities), Douglas was able to sufficiently recognise and store the norms (as dispositions) which surrounded his role about when to intervene with players and when to step back and allow David to lead (Elder-Vass, 2012a).

The very fact that Douglas frequently used the term *let* (e.g., 'I *let* David lead it' and 'he *lets* me go with the fast bowlers') suggests that he perceived a hierarchical relationship, which meant that his agency was both constrained (i.e., he could not act whenever he wanted to lead on team discussions) and used (i.e., to step back and allow David to lead, or to deliver talks to team members when asked to do so) to enact his role norms. Here, it was possible for David to influence

the membership of the organisation (i.e., those within the squad) 'by making the endorsement and/or enforcement of… norms part of the roles of certain other positions' (i.e., assistant coach and team manager) (Elder-Vass, 2010a, p. 165). For instance, by asking Douglas to relay messages to the squad in terms of what constituted expected levels of performance:

> After finishing day one of the three day away tour, David was going to be absent for the following two days of play due to attending a close friends' wedding. Sam was also absent from the entire tour as a result of family commitments. David asked Douglas to remind the team of the focus for the following day's play in his absence. This surrounded the plan to bat for approximately 30 overs in the next day, before declaring, in order to give the opposition less chance of chasing the total and winning the match. David stated that there may be the opportunity to declare earlier if the batters played well [leaving this responsibility in the hands of Douglas], and that the plan would be to bowl 5 over spells for the bowlers. The following morning, in a team briefing before play commenced, Douglas relayed the messages as passed on by David to the team:
>
> *Douglas:* 'Right, we have got 33 overs to bat – we don't need to use 33 overs. We need to target something – if we get four [runs] an over, for 33 overs [from our current position], that will give us 364 [runs]. 300 is the maximum batting points [we can get], but I think they [the opposition] could chase down 300 – they have never scored less than 300 [in this competition], so I know they have got a different team out, but even so, we have got to be sure. So, that would leave them [the opposition] 69 overs to beat our total. It would also leave us 69 overs to bowl them out… We have to bowl them out. They have to overtake our score. Whoever does that wins the game… Right, so let's just play the scenario we get 150 [runs from now]. So, bowling wise – seam bowlers, you know what you are gonna get. You're gonna get 30 balls max[imum]. Right. If you're not on the money, you'll not get 30 balls. You'll not get more than 30 balls. Unless you are on a hat-trick or something like that… No warm-up balls, no looseners [poor deliveries which are likely to allow the opposition to score more runs] or anything like that. You should be ready to bowl, okay. Good luck, lads. I've got to keep David informed [of the scores] mind, so no pissing about'.
>
> *Field note extract (31 July 2018)*

Indeed, in and through his (inter)actions over time, David was able to orchestrate by acting on behalf of the norm circle to shape the beliefs, dispositions, and thus the tendency of Douglas to act in alignment with his role norms as assistant coach (i.e., to allow David to lead and enact his requests) (Jones & Wallace, 2005). Because of the set of relations between agents, the organisation was able to act (through David) to increase the tendency of its role incumbents to enact their role norms. Had the organisation not been arranged into this same set of relations, it would not have had the same emergent property of producing a tendency to enact role norms so closely (Elder-Vass, 2010a). Here, then, where role incumbents enacted their performance expectations, this helped David to reduce pathos; it served to reduce the distance between his goals for the squad and the

actual ability to then achieve these goals.

Sam also elucidated his thoughts about his role and how this was related to the roles of David and Douglas. Specifically, he referred to the lack of trust which he perceived David afforded to himself and Douglas when David first started to work within the under 17 programme, how this trust and relationship had developed over time, and what this meant for his current role:

> David, I think, I'll be honest, we speak about it – me and Douglas – quite a bit. It took him a while to trust we [us]. And I think he wanted to come in, he didn't really know we [us] you kna [know], he had worked with we [us] so, you kna, I think he… I understood it cos I think he knew that erm, he had to be seen to be leading. And so he tended to lead all of the time. And eh, I'll be perfectly honest, I didn't like standing round all of the time, you kna. I like my involvement and I have to be honest with that. But I think it has took 12 months for him to get to know we [us] and trust we [us] really, and he does now, you kna, I text him last night about stuff that I had done a couple of nights previously – can we do that [activity] tonight, if you want, I'm quite happy to set it up? "Ney problem" [imitating David] and stuff – so he does trust we, and it gives him a break, it gives him a chance to have a look at stuff as well, because we are a coaching team and we all have, we all have different attributes you kna. I mean I probably bring the passion, he brings the technicality, and Douglas' the good organiser, so I think it's quite a good mix really, you kna, so. And to be fair, the sessions are really, really enjoyable – they just fly by, you kna
>
> He's [David] the head coach. He's the main man really, so when he's, you kna, some of the stuff that he fetches [brings] in, you kna, we have to learn, we have to play to that. That's our game plans and stuff, we try to stick to them and they've been – to be perfectly honest – last year they were brilliant. Very simple, but very, very structured and that's how we won the league, to be fair. We just, having them little game plans and his little chats – at the drinks breaks and at lunch, you kna, particularly when we were batting. And a little bit on the fielding side, where we tended to all chip in with a little bit as we were walking around the field and stuff. But that batting – that was his responsib- mainly his responsibility and we just left him to it. So, aye we're very different but we, we, we work well together, you kna. I think it's good.
>
> Semi-structured interview with Sam (22nd March 2018)

Sam, too, recognised a need to 'play to' the practices and role norms as put forward by David in his role as head coach. However, he suggested that he was unhappy with his initial levels of involvement as a coach when he first started to work with David, which he attributed to David not trusting him. As previous work in coaching has highlighted, trust is an integral aspect of ontological security and the maintenance of positive working relationships (Purdy et al., 2008). Here, Sam stated that he liked to be heavily involved or 'hands on' when coaching but was unable to do so in light of the (lack of) trust originally placed in him. In this sense '[w]hen individuals become parts of organisations, they do not lose the powers they have as individuals, but those

powers are channelled and constrained as a result of the relations those individuals now have with others in the organisation' (Elder-Vass, 2010a, p. 159). A good example here was evident when Sam discussed how his role had changed since David had come in as head coach of the squad. Instead of going on at drinks breaks in matches and delivering different messages, Sam now stated that he appreciated the need to allow David to lead and tailor the messages he delivered in his own coaching to David's plans:

> Whereas, in years gone past, I might go on [to speak to the players] one session – tell them [players] something. Then XXXX [another coach who is no longer with the squad] might go on another session and tell them something totally different or something. At least we are – we are all singing from the same hymn sheet really and we have one, you kna, he's the main man [David] for that, really. The odd times I might have to go on [to do a team talk], if he's doing something else or something, but we still carry the same message about what our game plan was and where we want to be at a certain stage of the game.
>
> Semi-structured interview with Sam (22nd March 2018)

Sam's behaviours had perhaps been shaped or channelled in light of the authority relations with David as the head coach, whereby David did much of the delivery. As with Douglas above, the organisation (through David's interactions and the set of relations between its members) was able to shape the tendency of its role incumbents to act in specific ways through storing beliefs or dispositions about their roles (Elder-Vass, 2010a). David's orchestrative actions (on behalf of the organisation) had allowed him to manage pathos because if Sam did not act in alignment with his role norms, this could have jeopardised the organisation's ability to achieve its aims (Jones & Wallace, 2005). In affording power to David, Sam decided not to challenge the 'status quo' and instead accepted that David was responsible for the direction of the squad. Sam also referred to his understanding that David needed to 'be seen to be leading' in his actions, suggesting that his own performance – strategic (non)interaction – was micro-politically impression managed (Goffman, 1959). Here, although being disgruntled with his level of involvement as a coach in leading on activities, Sam did not decide to confront this issue with David directly, or demonstrate his 'true' feelings publicly; he engaged in emotional labour (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). In fact, he often disguised these feelings from David, instead speaking with his colleague, Douglas, to air his

frustrations. This was made possible as Sam and Douglas had worked with each other for a long period of time and thus felt comfortable in exchanging and confiding sensitive information:

> Erm… this will be David's second year I think – with the 17's – but he's been with the [Cricket] Board probably seven or eight years or something. I think it's a good thing that we have some some- a full-timer in each squad – I think that's a good idea. You kna, it was me, XXXX [another coach who is no longer with the squad] and Douglas [who ran the squad previously]. Me and Douglas go back probably 20 years now – we have coached together for 20 years, from under 12's at XXXXXXXX [location of squad tour] and stuff. And then we just ended up moving up [the age groups] together, and err, but erm, he knas [knows] me, I kna [know] him, you kna.
>
> Semi-structured interview with Sam (22nd March 2018)

Sam could then be said to have made what Goffman (1969) called a 'control move' in privately texting David to ask if he could set-up and lead an activity. Without revealing his true feelings (that he was not satisfied with his levels of involvement), Sam had instead again micro-politically acted (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a), to cover this belief, simply contending that he was willing to help in setting the activity up, in view of improving his situation (i.e., increasing his levels of involvement as a coach). Based on his observations of player performance, Sam also frequently made suggestions to David about selection and highlighted areas which he felt the players needed to work on. In doing so, Sam tried to demonstrate his knowledge and cultural competence as a coach, attempting to develop capital (Jones, 2006a; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a; Potrac et al., 2002), and thus increase the trust which David afforded to him to lead delivery in sessions and matches:

> In the lead up to a batting activity, Sam makes a suggestion to David as to who he thinks should receive batting practice:
>
> *Sam:* 'I spoke with him last week – Thomas – I think we need to get [him] batting a little bit more [in sessions], because he could bat like four [batting position in the order] for us, something like that…'?
>
> *Field note extract (25 February 2018)*
>
> we could conceivably have four wicket-keepers, could be in the team if we play Oscar as well, as a batter. You would have him, I think Lawrence was probably the – other than Roger – Lawrence was probably the pick of the batters, you kna, at least he had a game plan, you kna, he's erm, he's not the most talented, but he had a game plan against spin of how he was ganna play and stuff. He probably batted the longest, you kna, so you kna, you could probably say well – and David agreed with us on Monday that he has probably got to play as a batter.
>
> Semi-structured interview with Sam (22nd March 2018)

Indeed, as highlighted in section 6.2.1, over time, Sam's actions had been somewhat successful in that he was able to lead on coaching activities more frequently. However, these activities were typically pre-approved by David, or David stepped in to modify/deliver feedback in the activity. Even when leading on activities, Sam frequently felt the need to demonstrate (to David) his awareness that David was the head coach and in overall charge of the squad. For example, before delivering a warm-up activity at the start of a session, Sam checked with David that he was happy for him to proceed:

> As Sam finishes setting cones out for the warm-up which he is about to lead on, before he begins, he turns to David.
>
> *Sam [to David]*: 'Are you wanting to say owt [anything] first [to the players] or will I just warm them up'?
>
> *David:* 'Aye, well like we'll see who's here'.
>
> David then opens the session and delivers a talk to the players about the session ahead.
>
> *Field note extract (18 February 2018)*

Perhaps this was an attempt by Sam to tread carefully in order to maintain his ability to lead on activities. By respecting and demonstrating acceptance of David's role as head coach of the squad (Tourish, 2019), Sam was likely working towards achieving his desired end of maintaining greater levels of involvement as a coach (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a).

Despite Sam's desire to conform with the requests of David as a result of his dispositions and keenness to be 'involved' when coaching, at times, he went against the requests of David. For instance, in one of the activities whereby David had explicitly told the players that they would not receive any coaching input to start with, and that they were to work things out for themselves, Sam continued to walk down and offer advice to batters:

> In the middle of a batting activity, where batters and bowlers have been set different match scenarios to work with, David brings the players together to deliver feedback. After providing technical information to the squad, David asks the players to take ownership and for the coaches to 'step back' and simply observe what is happening:
>
> *David:* 'Okay, so what I want. What I'd like us to do, now lads, is I want to take the coaching out of it. So I want all of us [coaches] to just move back and just watch what goes on. Because I am seeing some really good stuff, but the stuff that I don't like to see is really basic, and really individual, and really, you know, what should be your fundamentals as a cricketer. County under 17's. You know, I see some really good stuff, and then some average stuff like 30 seconds after. Like how does that work?

> How do we get out of looking really good and then missing a ball, or not concentrating, or doing something different? What we [coaches] can't do is intercept and interrupt that all the time and ask questions right. I really like this sort of thing where you come in half way through [an activity] and generate a little bit of awareness. And sometimes I tell a little bit too much, but in certain – when I do do that – it's because I think there is a massive necessity for it. So now what I'd like to see you do is go back into the roles that you are doing. We'll move the batters round a little bit. Have a, and literally take some time to think about what you are doing in that lane. What's your job? What's the role? What's the scenario'?
>
> Shortly after recommencing the activity, Sam provides some technical advice to one of the batters, thus ignoring the request of David.
>
> While I stand with David chatting about the session which has recommenced, David notices Sam intervene to provide one of the batters with more technical advice.
>
> *David [to me]:* 'So what does the coach do – like I've said to the coach that I want the coaches to stand back, not do anything, you know'.
>
> David then turns to Douglas and ensures that he is also not getting involved in providing players with information:
>
> *David [to Douglas]:* 'Are you keeping score or anything'?
>
> *Douglas:* 'I wasn't, no'.
>
> *David:* 'Well can you just, can we just, watch. Let them work it out themselves. Try and take the coach away. That's what I want to try and [do]. Because they are going to have to do it aren't they? Like, it's the same over there [in Sam's net]. I really wanted Sam to be out of it so they [the players] can work it out for themselves, instead of just like, if they make a wrong shot, telling them what they could be doing better. I'm just really interested to see, without really any input, how they do it, because I think it'll give you a clear indication as to how they are going to go [play] in a game'.
>
> Sometime later, David overhears Sam delivering feedback to one of the batters again. Airing his thoughts in private with the strength and conditioning coach close by, David expresses his frustrations:
>
> *David:* 'Don't talk every ball. Let them have a go man, for fuck sake'.
>
> *Field note extract (25 February 2018)*

Here, David had orchestrated by intentionally creating some ambiguity for players – to see how well they knew their role (norms) without input (i.e., normative endorsement/enforcement) from coaches. In other words, he attempted to scaffold the context to generate instability (Santos et al., 2013). The performance of the other coaches (e.g., Sam), however, again contributed toward the tension experienced by David in feeling that he was obligated to give them some responsibility, but that he was then not able to trust them in fully delivering on his requests (Purdy et al., 2013; Sztompka, 1999).

When, in an interview, I asked Sam about his thoughts on David's request to have the coaches 'step back' from their involvement, he again alluded to his desire to be constantly involved as a coach:

> Well, well I gan [go] along with it [what David says], I do things, but I cannot help it, I have to have- and in the end I have to like go in and say well look, what about this, or what about that [to the player]? You kna, so I have to have a little bit of involvement. I'm probably the first one to gan down [and speak to the players] and I end up being involved, but that's just me. You kna, that's – but I see where he [David] is coming from – there is sometimes I do like to step back and have a look. You kna, I'm always wandering round and having a look, and having a look at backswings and erm… bowlers' actions and stuff and feet positions, and massive into, into collapsing front legs and that stuff that [I] never ever looked at before. You kna, just since I got involved with the bowling group and stuff. I have always been massive on backswing with batters and stuff, so obviously pick up on that a lot. But, I think sometimes you have to get down the other end and say, well look, you kna [know] – that's not working.
>
> Semi-structured interview with Sam (22nd March 2018)

Here, this passage demonstrates that despite being aware of and influenced by the role norms (as stored as dispositions through previous interactions and decisions), Sam used conscious reflexivity and sometimes acted in ways which constituted resistance against the head coach's requests (Elder-Vass, 2007b). Despite David's attempts to control the actions of Sam (i.e., in allowing the players to perform without any input from the coaches), he was not able to do so entirely. In other words, there was pathos between David's initial goal and his actual ability to achieve it (Jones & Wallace, 2005)

Players too, aired their perceptions of the roles played by each of the coaches (in relation to their own roles as athletes) within interviews. These perceptions generally conformed with and reinforced the roles as described by David, Sam and Douglas in this section. It was again apparent from all athletes interviewed that, in their eyes, David was the head coach of the squad. For example:

> Well I think David is, David is – he's a lot more like authoritarian and kind of strict and, erm, he knows what he wants and he wants to get that, and he's very, very determined to get that. Erm, then Douglas, he's, he's obviously got a very, very wide knowledge and experience of what's going on, but he's there to kind of more like nurture and just get you to reflect on your game and kind of like – it's not as do this, do that, but more like kind of stand back, watch, and then just add on like little bits and stuff, and kind of stand back but not be the main coach, but still have lots of, kind of, advice and stuff. And then Sam is the same [as Douglas], he's a lot more about

> kind of game advice and like, you know what you want to be focussing on and stuff and making you think and then David, more kind of – he's the, the real teller what to do.
>
> Semi-structured interview with Derek (25th February 2018)

> I'd, err, pro- I think they play different roles, slightly so erm,… … David is kind of the head coach obviously and he… takes more of a hard… hard role in kind of speaking to people – telling them what they have done wrong. Whereas Douglas is more of an upbeat character I would say. Erm, helping with players' confidence at the time and stuff, if they are not in form or something. And then Sam is around helping with the coaching as well – he's probably more similar to Douglas, again. And David is probably more technical/tactical than the others, I'd say. I don't think David is like a bad cop – you know, he still gets on well with the players, and what not. Err, and he's, he just kind of tells it as it is and will tell you, you have played a bad shot there, or something, you know – someone has got to do it, so. I think that's what David's role [is].
>
> Semi-structured interview with Jamie (22nd July 2018)

> I think, I think David is a bit more… sort of hard on you, in a way, which is very good, but I mean – where you go, you need to do this, you need to do that, whereas the other two sit back a little bit, but I mean it's definitely better going hard on – I prefer that myself, personally, because I can then think what to work on. Otherwise, it's just not gonna go very well in a match.
>
> Semi-structured interview with Michael (10th April 2018)

> It sounds bad but like I wouldn't take, erm, like Sam's words as maybe seriously as erm, David's, because that's not his role as a coach. I think his role is just, erm – be there, a bit of humour, just err constant reminders of what we need to do basically
>
> Stimulated recall interview with Roger (23rd July 2018)

Authority relations within the organisation studied were not purely a product of the role specifications in place (i.e., head coach, assistant coach, team manager and athlete); such power relations were also influenced by other entities (i.e., indexical/regulative norms and the allocation of capital to others; Elder-Vass, 2010a, 2012a). While many norms are indiscriminately indexical (i.e., there is no limit to the number of actors or objects that the indexical terms refer to), many norms are not; some norms only apply to a sub-set of the agents who experience the influence of the norm circle (Elder-Vass, 2012a). Coaches (of junior sports), for example, may (in the majority of cases) have regulative norms which set an expectation that they select the team, provide guidance/instructions and cannot play in the team themselves. Junior athletes, meanwhile, may (generally) have regulative norms which mean that they are expected to play in the team but are not responsible for selecting players or providing guidance/instructions. These are still actor-indexical norms in so far as there are many coaches (and many athletes), but on any occasion when the rule

applies, we need to identify *which* coach (or athlete) they are applied to. Here, indexing norms rely on regulative norms (and vice versa) to function. Unless there are indexing norm(s) to define who constitutes a coach, for example, any regulative norms which set standards of behaviour expected by coaches are not only unenforceable but meaningless. Similarly, there is no meaning to the concept *coach* unless we have norms that regulate the behaviour of coaches (Elder-Vass, 2012a). In the present squad, it was evident that indexical (and regulative) norms existed to distinguish who occupied the role (and thus what was expected in terms of the behaviour of) head coach (i.e., David), assistant coach/team manager (i.e., Sam and Douglas) and athlete. These norms, then, helped to not only set (and maintain) expectations for role behaviour of the self, but also others. 'Not only is the role defined for the individual who occupies it, but it is known in considerable detail to others in the organization [sic] who have occasion to deal with him' (March & Simon, 1993, p. 22). For example, the general view that David was head coach of the squad, and thus, was in a position to set the game plan. As will be discussed later in this chapter, this set of relations allowed the organisation (through its members) to produce a tendency for athletes to act in particular ways (i.e., role norms). In other words, it allowed coaches to orchestrate and manage pathos/uncertainty by endorsing/enforcing role norms which shaped beliefs or dispositions about expected behaviour.

Capital too, shaped the authority relations present between agents in the organisation (Bourdieu, 1990). Capital can be defined as 'the capacity to exercise control over one's own future and the future of others'; it is, in essence, a form of power (Cushion, 2011, p. 44). I now provide some examples of the levels and types of capital afforded to the coaches by players, which was likely to have played a role in influencing the (dynamic) authority relations within the organisation.

> I think they [the coaches] are all very- hmm – I think they have all got a lot of experience so they know what they are talking about. Erm, David in particular, because obviously he has captained a first team in the XXXX [local premier league] so he's always going to have to look out for everyone else in the team as well as his own game. Erm, but obviously Sam and Douglas have had a lot of experience as well, so I think having the three experienced coaches come in and try and push everyone, I think that's quite good.
>
> Semi-structured interview with Connor (23rd February 2018)

> Erm, good, I think – like I e-mail David from time to time if I have questions and stuff, and erm, Douglas and Sam are both great, great coaches, but like [I've got] a lot of respect for David, and knowing the other two, and Douglas and Sam, cos there kind of needs to be, cos they are the coaches and you do know that, and you've got to keep that in mind, but they are – you know they're nice people to be around as well… Well you can, like, erm – one, it's what they kind of tell you that, like you see erm – you see results from what they tell you and stuff and they also- you know they how- you know, they talk about their experiences and stuff, which also kind of makes you realise that they've been, you know, they've been here and they actually know what they're doing and stuff and they have a wide knowledge of what is going on.
>
> Semi-structured interview with Derek (25th February 2018)

> He's [David] got very good knowledge – so he'll t- for instance, when, last session, when we did the short ball, he was saying just try and niggle it round [hit the ball using a specific technique] – he tells you where different fielders would be, erm, what the pressure would be like – because obviously he has played at a high level as well, so he knows what the pressure is like, and stuff. So he talks to you about his sort of experience in the game, which I think is very, very useful because it sort of puts you in his shoes of what it is like and it's kind of beneficial.
>
> Semi-structured interview with Michael (10th April 2018)

Here, it was evident that the players had ascribed *social capital* (Bourdieu, 1986) to the coaches given their roles as head coach, assistant coach and team manager. In particular, David was afforded strong *social capital* in his role as head coach of the squad. David, Sam and Douglas were also all afforded a (variable) degree of *cultural capital* from many players in respect of their perceived experience as coaches. Further, all coaches (in particular David) were ascribed *symbolic capital* from their prestige or renown as a player, which was developed through coaches relating to their specific playing experiences in sessions or matches (Townsend & Cushion, 2017). Clearly, however, the levels of capital afforded to different coaches was not homogeneous across all athletes. For instance, this was depicted in the excerpt provided by Alan, which implied that, in his eyes, David had more symbolic capital in comparison to the other coaches (based upon his experiences of playing cricket at a higher level):

> Well he [David] has loads of knowledge in the game – like he has got… you can tell he has played like a high standard before, like – you can tell he has played that sort of cricket before because he knows everything about it and he, I mean he is a successful coach as well isn't he, so. He knows what he is doing. I think so yeah cos it would… they don't know – the other coaches like, they haven't played that level, they don't know what it is like to play like more day, like two-/three- day cricket, they don't know what it is like to play sessions and up to lunch and that. So, yeah I think as David has played in that cricket before he knows what is gonna happen, he knows what like… like a team can just really do well in the first day and it sets you up, like… the other coaches don't know that, like, so yeah…

Of importance here is that:

> leadership emerges primarily through a communicative process where claims to leader agency are made, enacted, modified and accepted by organizational [sic] actors. Leaders are those individuals who have more or less successfully claimed entitative status for the role of leader within organizational [sic] configurations (Tourish, 2019, p. 221).

As such, given entitative status for the role of leader can be granted or denied by different individuals under different circumstances, these concepts are built upon, explained, deepened and theorised in sections 6.4 – 6.7. In these sections, specific social events are explained in light of how specialised roles and authority relations might have played a role in the overall mechanism(s) underpinning the influence that coaches had (or did not have) on athletes. It is worth noting that, among the majority, David seemed to have achieved entitative status as a leader in the present context.

The purpose of the aforementioned excerpts and their interpretation is to highlight the broad responses, roles and authority relations between athletes and coaches. Importantly, in line with critical realist (emergentist) logic, entities are contingent – they are not based on stable sets of immutable relations between their parts (Elder-Vass, 2010a). This does not mean that entities cannot have any stable parts, however. Indeed, *demi-regularities* can be viewed as parts of an entity which remain relatively stable, while not stochastically determining the formation of an overall entity (Fleetwood, 2017). Here, for example, relations between coaches and athletes were not so changeable that parties could not identify between their own and others' roles upon leaving and re-entering the context for the next session or match. What section 6.2 provides, then, is a base from which the roles and authority relations of members of the organisation can be better understood, before examining their enactment and the role that they played within specific social events. In and of itself, this section also provides a novel understanding of the intricate roles and relations between (multiple) coaches and athletes, inclusive of *how*, *when*, *why* and *under which circumstances* coaches attempt to influence one another and athletes. This is important because without such organisation there would be 'no such roles and the people would behave differently'

(Elder-Vass, 2010a, p. 158). This was evident in a response from Alan, one of the players, who implied that his behaviour had been shaped through his (inter)actions with the coaches:

> Yeah, cos you want to do well for them, you want to do what they [coaches] have told you, like he is telling you one thing, you want to like, like when he was coaching, you know when he was saying to Connor – he wants you to hit the top of the bat, then when he got into the game he did that and hit the top of the bat [when you are bowling] – that's what you want to do. Like you want to do what the coach says, have it in your mind what the coach says, and you want to do well.
>
> Semi-structured interview with Alan (30th August 2018)

In other words, it was such specialised roles and authority relations which enabled coaches to 'coordinate the activities of other role incumbents at quite a detailed level and hence make it possible for the organisation as a whole to achieve much more than would otherwise be possible' (Elder-Vass, 2010a, p. 163). Coaches and athletes recognised that the power of the organisation to achieve (e.g., to win) was dependent upon both normative and non-normative mechanisms. Indeed, this required normative mechanisms in the sense that individuals (i.e., coaches and athletes) were required to be sufficiently aware of and have a tendency to implement their own role norms, and, also, non-normative mechanisms in the sense that individuals in these roles were required to sufficiently coordinate their role performances with the performances of other coaches and athletes. This created a source of ambiguity or pathos for coaches and athletes in that there was always the possibility that role incumbents may not sufficiently enact or coordinate their role performances/interactions. A key strategy used by coaches and athletes to manage this pathos was to orchestrate by endorsing and enforcing *role norms*, while recognising and making role incumbents aware of the importance of coordinating their interactions. For instance, in one of the matches the head coach, David, endorsed individual role norms for the fast bowlers (seamers) and recognised that their role enactment, alongside the role enactment of spin bowlers was important for the team to perform well:

> 'Alright, so the seamers – if you are asked to come back on – right, it has to be short and sharp, but it has to be fucking good – right. We can't afford [to bowl on] both sides of the wicket. We can't afford floaty [bowling without effort]. It has to be four overs, three or four overs of good, positive, aggressive seam up, alright and then the spin is going to have to dominate'.

Field note extract (24 July 2018)

This resonates particularly well with and further explains the definition of orchestration, which suggests that coaches attempt to bring about improvement in both the individual *and* collective performance of those being coached (Jones & Wallace, 2005). Given the importance of role norms and their collective enactment, the endorsement and enforcement of specific role norms will now be explored in greater depth.

6.3 Socially constructed role norms and the influence of norm circles

The purpose of this section is to introduce some of the norms observed, and how these norms played a role in influencing action, in the context studied. Cultural norms have been recognised as a strong influencer of behaviour within previous coaching literature (e.g., Cushion & Jones, 2006; Purdy et al., 2009; Purdy et al., 2008; Purdy & Jones, 2011; Townsend, Smith, & Cushion, 2015). However, few studies have attempted to explain or theorise the mechanisms which explain *how* these norms might play a role, alongside other entities, in influencing the specific actions of coaches and athletes. As such, Elder-Vass' concept of norm circles is utilised as a heuristic device to examine *how* both general and specific norms within Nettleton CC shaped the actions of key stakeholders, bringing a novel and situated explanation of this phenomenon to coaching literature. It is argued that, by acting on behalf of norm circles, coaches were able to orchestrate uncertainty and make the achievement of their goals in practice more likely. While the role norms of coaches have been set out in section 6.2, this section focuses more explicitly on the role norms (as endorsed and enforced by coaches and expected) of athletes.

6.3.1 *Types of norm circle and their causal influence*

Elder-Vass (2012a) distinguished between four primary sub-types of norm circle (Figure 1.6). All of these norm circles come under the umbrella of cultural norm circles. In other words, culture is normative and all norm circles are cultural (Elder-Vass, 2012a). *Practical* norm circles refer to social practices which are non-linguistic; they are related to practical 'doing' (i.e., the action of queueing), although they may be enforced or endorsed through linguistic means (i.e., by asking somebody to join the back of the queue). *Linguistic* norm circles relate to how language is

used itself (i.e., how we use specific words to elicit particular meaning, the accents we use etc.), whereas what we (should and should not) say when we communicate is shaped by *discursive* norm circles. Nested within *discursive* norm circles are *epistemological* and *epistemic* norm circles – these refer to the regulation of which 'standards may be used to justify the assertion that belief is knowledge' and the regulation of which '*specific* claims within a certain space may be treated as knowledge', respectively (Elder-Vass, 2012a, p. 32). Clearly, because the present thesis was concerned with a more detailed examination of *how*, *when*, *why* and *under which circumstances* coaching practice influenced (or did not influence) athletes within a sporting environment, much of the succeeding sections will be focused on the influence of *practical* norm circles (whilst recognising the interconnectedness of other types of norm circles). Indeed, of particular interest was how (inter)actions and norm circles could produce a tendency for athletes to act according to particular role norms (or not). Given 'practical norms and the norm circles that support them are an important (and perhaps neglected) element of culture' (Elder-Vass, 2012a, p. 31), this thesis also contributes toward a broader meaningful research agenda. Specifically, it provides an opportunity to explore an under-researched area in order to understand more about the way in which practical acts (i.e., performance) may be shaped by normative structures through (inter)action with others.

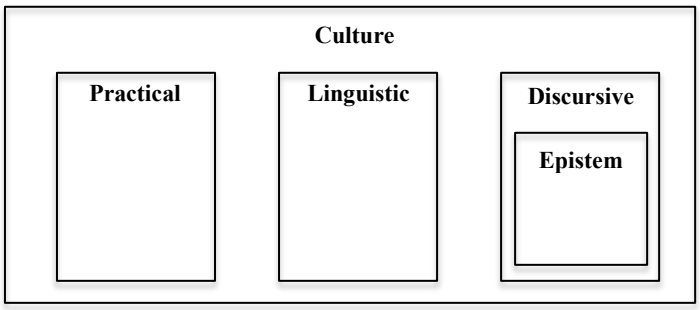


Figure 1.6 Types of norm circle (adapted from Elder-Vass, 2012a)

As alluded to earlier in this thesis (please see section 4.5) it is not the norm itself, but the norm circle (through interactions of those acting on behalf of the norm circle), which causally influences the actions of agents (alongside conscious reflexivity; Elder-Vass, 2010a) by storing or shaping beliefs/dispositions. In light of an emergentist ontology, whereby mechanisms and their causal influence are contingent (i.e., not homogeneous or law-like), critical realists assert the

necessity of empirical investigation which is situated within specific social (contextual) circumstances (Danermark et al., 1997). Therefore, in order to bring the investigation closer to its social milieu, I now introduce some of the (practical) norm circles which appeared to causally influence and be influenced by the (inter)actions of agents within the environment studied. In doing so, there is a need to understand both *general* and *local* role norms (Elder-Vass, 2010a).

General role norms refer to (socially constructed) beliefs, values or practices which are generally accepted (and tend to be conformed to) by those in similar roles in other organisations (i.e., the wider cricketing fraternity). For example, most individuals who play within (elite) cricket teams will tend to accept that successful role performance for a batter is to score runs without getting out, while successful role performance for a bowler, fielder or wicket keeper is to take wickets or to restrict the opposition from scoring. Local role norms, on the other hand, are (socially constructed) beliefs, values, or practices which are specific to the organisation and may differ from other organisations. For example, specific organisations may endorse or enforce a particular expectation for players to clean the dressing room after the match. It can be said, then, that although these beliefs or actions are *proximally* endorsed and enforced at a local level (e.g., encouraged and praised by coaches in specific squads), the causal influence also lies with the *actual* and *imagined* norm circles (Elder-Vass, 2012a). The actual norm circle is the total sum of people who tend to believe that these role norms are to be applied. Because it is unlikely that the individual within a role will ever meet all individuals who tend to enforce and endorse these norms (e.g., all cricketers who conform to a specific norm), it can be said that it is also the *imagined* norm circle that causally influences the actions of individuals within specific roles. This norm circle is not imagined in the sense that it does not exist; it is imagined in terms of the *extent* to which the individual in the role believes it to be true (i.e., how many people a cricketer believes also conform to the same role norms relating to successful performance; Elder-Vass, 2010a). Although general role norms may apply to cricket as a whole, they can only be sustained and reproduced as long as they are endorsed and enforced within proximal norm circles.

6.3.2 *The proximal endorsement of general role norms*

A strong causal influence of the *proximal* norm circle (i.e., those in the immediate presence of the context, who individuals interact with) was evident in David's words at one of the early indoor training sessions:

> *David:* 'The first thing that you have to do is perform consistently… You have to understand that the first thing that you have to do is score runs and take wickets… so if you look at your own stats and you've got one senior fifty. In your life [with raised eyebrows and blowing air from puffed out cheeks]. And you know, you're a batter. Then, how can you be expecting to push a level up... The challenge is down to you'.
>
> *Field note extract (18 February 2018)*

David's addressing of the squad here could be interpreted as an act to endorse and enforce the general role norms of batters and bowlers within the game of cricket at a local level. He had attempted to 'endorse and enforce a set of normative conventions and customs' with the consequence that those under his charge would 'internalise a tendency to conform to these norms' or that the strength of their already internalised dispositions would be heightened (Elder-Vass, 2012a, p. 23). Indeed, many players within the squad were able to mutually appreciate the role norms, raising these to a level of conscious verbalisation in interviews:

> Just win every game and me scoring runs and just doing well for the team.
>
> Semi-structured interview with Alan (30th August 2018)

> Erm… I think… they [coaches] want batters to score runs and bowlers to take wickets and things like that. Erm… yeah, batters to be hard to get out, I think David quite likes that idea. Erm, and then bowlers I'm not really sure, because I haven't really been involved in any of the bowling.
>
> Semi-structured interview with Lawrence (26th January 2018)

> Because, since it's challenging you've got to- you need to be able to make sure you improve as a player to be able to keep up with his sessions, because you don't want to be- you need to be setting high standards and that's what he does really and that makes you a better player.
>
> Semi-structured interview with Dylan (15th February 2018)

> But it is a strong squad. It is a very strong squad. I think everyone in the squad is capable of being in the team though, so it's gonna be hard for everyone to pick. Erm, it's just a case of having the right amount of bowlers bowling at the same- in good areas. Batsmen who can bat the time [for long periods] – that is all David has said to us really, where do you fit in the team – how long can you bat for? How long can you bowl for, accurately? And it's just about that case, yeah.
>
> Semi-structured interview with Michael (10th April 2018)

Importantly, however, we cannot infer directly from these data that the athletes had indeed internalised the role norms (Elder-Vass, 2012a). It is not the norm itself which causally influences action; the causal influence of the norm circle acts through storing the norm as a disposition in our habitus, which we then make reference to *unconsciously* in shaping action (Elder-Vass, 2007b). Further, there is in fact no necessity that 'those who observe and even endorse norms are personally committed to the rightness of those norms: They may do so for purely instrumental reasons' (Elder-Vass, 2012a, p. 29). For instance, Alan – one of the athletes – referred to his desire to please the coaches, even if he disagreed with their views or opinions:

> I don't think I would [go against what the coaches say] no – err, maybe, maybe if I disagreed with them a bit, but you always want to be on the coaches' side and you know, you want to be, err… doing what the coach says.
>
> Semi-structured interview with Alan (30th August 2018)

Of significance here, though, is the assertion that both unconscious *habitus* and *conscious reflexivity* play a role in causally influencing action (Elder-Vass, 2007b). That is to say, some of the above (conscious) excerpts, perhaps depicting normative beliefs of the athletes, may have also indicated the role of conscious reflexivity in causally influencing their action at the time of specific action occurring. In Elder-Vass' words, the emergentist theory of action does not:

> deny any significance to the normative beliefs of the individuals concerned. Indeed, it is one of the strengths of the emergentist perspective that it accepts that entities at many levels of a laminated whole can simultaneously have causal powers and that these powers may interact to produce actual events (Elder-Vass, 2010a, p. 124).

The work of seeking to more closely explain both the causal influence of norm circles and conscious reflexivity in influencing action, then, will be completed through the elucidation of specific social events later in sections 6.4 to 6.7. The purpose of the present section is to begin to provide sufficient information as to what the (role) norms of the context were and *how*, ontologically, they could influence action according to an emergentist (realist) perspective, in order to preface such explanation. Nonetheless, we can now see how role norms are both socially constructed (i.e., created by us) and *can* causally influence our (inter)action – they are compatible with a realist ontology (Elder-Vass, 2012a).

Other more widely accepted (i.e., general) role norms in elite sport, which were endorsed and enforced by the proximal norm circle within Nettleton CC under 17's squad were to perform with *intensity*, *responsibility* and *accountability* to achieve high performance (Coakley, 1992). These *linguistic* terms were used to ascribe particular meaning to acts which were governed by *practical* norm circles (Elder-Vass, 2012a). For example, within one of the indoor training sessions a short, sharp fielding drill was carried out. Before this drill had started, Sam provided the players with some instruction and emphasised the speed at which the drill was to be executed:

> *Sam:* 'Right… Derek is ganna [going to] attack it [the ball], [and throw it] into Roger, underarm. Into Roger. Roger is gonna drop it off to Dylan. Dylan is gonna underarm back into Connor. Right? I want you nice and quick. Two-handed pick-ups. Okay? Ready?'
>
> A demonstration of the activity is then run through with the players:
>
> *Sam*: 'So it's in there [Sam feeds the ball out], [Connor approaches the ball to pick it up and offloads the ball to Derek] Got to be quick. In there [Derek offloads the ball to Roger]. [Roger attacks the ball and flicks it with pace into Dylan] Good. Nice and quick'.
>
> As the drill then progresses and David takes over the feeding and delivery, Connor attacks the ball at pace, picks it up cleanly, and throws it accurately underarm to Derek.
>
> *David:* 'Good – well done, Connor – good'.
>
> *Field note extract (18 February 2018)*

It could be said here that David and Sam (in their specialised roles) acted in support of the norm for practical activities to be completed at a high level of intensity. As such, it was the group that acted through its members (David and Sam) to causally endorse and enforce the norm (Elder-Vass, 2010a). The influence of such (inter)action (i.e., coaches verbalising these terms in relation to specific athlete performance) was dependent upon the capacity of individual athletes to observe such occurrences, however. In this sense:

> [o]nly individuals have the power to hold beliefs; only groups have the power to designate those beliefs as elements of shared culture. Culture is not simply belief, but socially endorsed belief, and that social endorsement can only be brought about by the group – a norm circle (Elder-Vass, 2012a, p. 44).

Connor, one of the players involved in this fielding activity, commented on his perceptions surrounding what he had observed in this series of (inter)actions:

> I think it's sort of – he [David] had said before, before that point – he had said something like ohh get your strides in or do this, do that, then I go and receive a ball and throw it up and then he says like… well done, Connor. Something like that. It's sort of a morale boost as well, knowing that I was lazy last time round but this time I have done it properly, threw it up and he is impressed with what I have done. So like that is within what I know what I need to do in order to keep doing it right, and I keep the coaches happy. So then from that point onwards I know, like I'll think back – go right, what did I do last time, what did I do right? What do I need to do again to keep it right? Erm, what was the intensity I used. And even then I wasn't using full intensity but I was a lot, sort of more up for it than what I was on the last one. But it's just little things like that where he [David] will say oh well done, or good pick up or something, you know straight away – oh right, he has said this so that is obviously good, so I'll keep that the same. And from there you can work on, right – I am picking the ball up cleanly, however I am still a bit slow to the ball, so you'll, once you're trying to keep the way you pick the ball up the same you might then try and pick your speed up, which is obviously then picking your intensity up, so. It's all pretty much about intensity when he says – even if he like compliments what you are doing, you still want to give more. Even if you have got nothing more to give, you still feel like you want to give more…
>
> I think he [David] was trying to put his message out that that [performance] is roughly what he wants, and like the sort of area of, like if you have got, someone before or after me like slacking, or maybe if they have had a few ones where they have picked the ball up nice and they have ran in well, but there is a few other ones where they have sort of trapped the ball and sort of like dished it off slowly, then I think just by saying that – it doesn't even need to be me, it could be anyone else in the group – he could say anyone's name there, but I think anyone else in the group – so say if that was someone else there and I was waiting to go next, and he said ohh well done, Roger, or well done, Derek, or something like that, then I'll know, right, he done that well, that is the intensity I need to go at, so then I'll follow that and hopefully do the same… Like he'll [David] say it to an individual player but it'll have an impact on the whole group – it's very weird to think of, but it does actually.
>
> Semi-structured interview with Connor (23rd February 2018)

In these excerpts, Connor describes what could be understood as a recognition and interpretation of the (practical) norm to perform activities with intensity. When athletes were praised by coaches for performing according to this norm, this proximally endorsed and strengthened the norm for those who observed it (Elder-Vass, 2012a). From the descriptions provided, it would appear that Connor's conscious awareness of what was required of him was congruent with the role norm for intensity and causally influenced his behaviour, alongside this norm being stored (and accessed unconsciously) within neural and synaptic networks (Elder-Vass, 2007b). Indeed, the conscious reflexivity and subsequent decision (to apply effort) employed by Connor, which then received praise from the head coach, likely strengthened his disposition or belief about performing in this way. As well as coaches acting on behalf of the norm circle to causally influence (endorse and enforce) the beliefs of those in the organisation, athletes also played a role in shaping the extent and

prominence of these norms in influencing the behaviour of others. Indeed, Connor suggested that the way in which he perceived the (normative) performances and actions of other athletes played an important role in how he felt he should then behave and perform himself:

> I think last year was better for me, because it was my first year coming into the [under] 17's, and obviously the year above me had had that year experience anyway, so I was coming in, obviously with that sort of block in mind. Erm, and I seen the intensity that all of the lads were putting into their game, even in the fielding drills, or the fitness drills at the start – everyone was giving it 110%, so I was thinking well it's bad for me if I see everyone else in here giving it their all and I'm 50%. So I thought if they're gonna do it, I'm gonna do it. So that pushed me, and then once everyone is pushing their hardest the coaches are happy. I think, just because we were all giving our all and the coaches would see it, they were very positive as well.
>
> Semi-structured interview with Connor (23rd February 2018)

Here, then, it is not just the manager (i.e., coach) who acts on behalf of the norm circle to causally influence beliefs or dispositions about role norms (e.g., through endorsing/enforcing certain behaviour or performance). It is also the actual enactment of performance or behaviour by others (i.e., athletes) which can influence the strength of the norm and its applicability (Elder-Vass, 2010a). Had athletes exercised their agency and capacity to consciously shape action, they could have decided to rebel against such norms. Doing so would have likely weakened the strength of the specific role norm in causally influencing (through norm circles) the behaviour of others, unless coaches or others had demonstrated displeasure with such action. What should now be apparent is that those who are part of a norm circle act differently than if they were not part of such a causal social structure:

> As a consequence of being members of a norm circle… individuals act differently than they would do otherwise. Even if they held the same normative belief, they would not necessarily act in the same ways regarding it (either endorsing it so strongly or enacting it so frequently) if they were not part of a circle that shares a commitment to endorse and observe the norm (Elder-Vass, 2010a, p. 124).

As well as intensity, *responsibility* and *accountability* were frequently endorsed and enforced at Nettleton CC. A good example of this was present when the team suffered a collapse, losing three wickets in quick succession in one of their two-day matches:

> Chasing a total of 342 runs to win the first innings of a two-day match, Nettleton are currently on 72 runs for the loss of one wicket, after 21 overs. Derek, who is on 43 runs, tries to hit the ball past the fielders on the off-side and misses it. The following

ball he attempts the same shot and gets an edge on the ball [hits it] before he is caught (out) by the wicket keeper.

David: [Verbalising his thoughts quietly so that nobody else can hear] 'Ohh, that's shit.'

Two overs later, Matthew – the team captain who has just come in to bat – looks to hit the ball over the top of the fielders, but instead hits it straight up into the air and is caught out by the fielder. The fielding team go crazy, jumping on the fielder who has just taken the catch. Matthew looks visibly frustrated waving his bat from hand to hand, before walking off the field with his shoulders hunched and his head looking down towards the floor.

David: [not possible for Matthew to hear, but still in the earshot of other players] 'What. The. Fuck. Has he done that, for!?... Fucking hell.'

David then walks from just outside of the dressing room, where the majority of players are gathered, to join the other coaches [Sam and Douglas] who are walking around the boundary on the opposite side of the pitch.

David: 'Discuss that then…'

Douglas: 'Shite shot.'

David: 'Eh?'

Douglas: 'Two shite shots.'

David: '*Fucking* hell!'

Sam: 'Derek was playing a shot a ball man [playing too attackingly]!'

David: 'Who?'

Sam: 'Derek was just playing a shot a ball, fucking let them gan [leave the ball] outside off-stump [when the ball is not close to hitting the stumps]!'

David: 'One of the things I did say this morning was watch how they [the opposition] played. And how they soaked the overs up and they batted time. We don't. I mean I know we're missing a couple of players, but we don't look like we can do that… Matthew! I mean what the fuck's he deeing [doing]!? Trying to hit it over mid-off [fielding position]. Into the wind!... He hasn't even scored a fucking run'.

Douglas: 'Big struggle now, David'.

David: 'Oh, aye… We need to get through the next half an hour really – make sure we don't lose any more wickets'.

Douglas: 'Before lunch… yeah, you're right'.

David: 'They [the opposition] are always gonna have a good spell in the game, just we don't look like we can cope with it'.

Douglas: Evan will play his shots like [meaning that Evan is naturally more of an attacking batsmen], David.

David: 'Well they all will won't they? That's the fucking problem. Micah is the only top order batsmen out the lot of them – the rest of them are fucking middle order players. I mean Jamie is too free for number three, he is a number five or six [batter], do you know what I mean? In a good team.

> *Douglas:* 'I'm disappointed with Matthew – he has got to do better than that if he wants to be…'
>
> *Sam:* 'If he [Matthew] wants to be a professional cricketer, David, and an off-spinner, you have to be able to bat, you know so he has to get hundreds [score a hundred runs] in these tournaments for them [professional clubs] to [pick him].
>
> *David:* 'Oh, I know'.
>
> Seven overs later, with the score now 92 runs for three wickets, Jamie looks to hit an aggressive shot over the top of the fielders. The ball balloons up off his bat and he is also caught out by one of the fielders. Once more the fielders celebrate.
>
> *David:* [To the other coaches] 'What's he deeing [doing], fucking five minutes before dinner man! Fucking playing cover drives into the spin! Have we not told him, have we not tried to educate him how to play the spin, eh? Against the spin – [the] hardest shot to play.'
>
> *Field note extract (25 July 2018)*

This field note extract valuably highlights the coaches' (inter)actions in noticing or 'seeing' events within the match and how it was unfolding (Jones, 2019; Mason, 2002). Their 'seeing' was more than simply *what* they had observed, 'but was qualified and created through particular, negotiated and comprised exchanges' with their colleagues (Corsby & Jones, 2020, p. 5). Much of their noticing appeared to be focused on and related to the role norms which they had earlier set out for batters (e.g., in David's description that he had told the team to take note of the oppositions' ability to bat for long periods and not get out – to 'soak the overs up'). The fact that athletes had failed to perform in accordance with these role norms was evidence of pathos (Jones & Wallace, 2006). There was a gap between the coaches' performance goals and the actual ability to then achieve these goals in practice. The above collaborative work between the three coaches was subsequently used by David to secure his observations and make them 'accountable' or 'understandable' to players of the team in a team talk during the lunch break:

> *David:* 'So the batters that are in [batting] now, and are due to come in – work it out. And work it out quickly. And if you're not quite sure, ask your mate. I still don't think there is enough communication going on between you as a pair. What you are looking to do, where you are looking to score. Where are the gaps. What should we not be doing. Alright… At the end of the day, lads, like we said this morning about how to play the game. There are so many things that they [the opposition] didn't do, as a team, as a batting team. But there is a lot of things that they did very well yesterday that we have done really badly today. And that's building an innings [batting for a long time and scoring runs]. Now the lads that have fucked up in the top order have put enormous pressure on the lads in the middle order, when it should be the other way around. So there is no way to get past it now, you two lads [Lawrence and Evan] have to bat a decent amount of time, and if you get out, you have to be *getting out*

> [i.e., receiving skilful performance from the opposition which is hard to counter]. Don't get yourselves out [by making a mistake or rash decision]. Everyone else has. Apart from Micah. You could sense it. Derek [you were playing] a shot a ball [taking too many risks and playing too attackingly]. Jamie [you were] a little bit fidgety, you know, we need to work on your leg-side play because we're saying it's a shovel [type of shot], we need soft hands [technique when hitting the ball], get it into the gap [between the fielders and run]. [David looks around the room before gazing through the changing room window at the field outside] Matthew. I don't know what to say... But you know, we have got to make sure that we have got a, you know, a fucking plan, and we know how we are gonna do it. And you walk out to bat and you say, right, this is what is going to happen…
>
> *Field note extract (25 July 2018)*

In making his observations visible, here, David had sought to enforce and endorse the norm that batters should play in a *responsible* and an *accountable* manner. These *linguistic* terms brought meaning to the *practical* acts of batting for a long period of time (i.e., not getting out) and scoring runs, through looking to 'build an innings'. The acts whereby the batters had got themselves out (playing in too much of an attacking manner for the circumstances of the match) had been punished by David, in attempt to proximally strengthen the power and presence of these norms within the organisation (Elder-Vass, 2010a). Thus, David's actions constituted orchestration in so far as they attempted to manage and work with some of the pathos evident (Jones & Wallace, 2005). This resonates closely with Jones' (2019) recent conceptualisation of coaching as the 'act of repair', whereby coaches attempt to restore parity to or 'mend' situations. Again, although enforced by the proximal norm circle, these norms could be said to be more *general* in the sense that those within the wider cricketing community would come to accept that batting in these ways (i.e., getting out early) did not constitute successful role performance. Batters who were in the changing room, and thus had the potential to notice David's practice, aired their interpretations of it within recall interviews:

> When he [David] is saying make sure not to get yourself out – make sure you are got out [in other words, to make sure that, if you get out as a batter, it is due to the exceptional performance of the opposition and not due to a mistake that you have made], that is quite a good one, cos that is something you can actually do when you are batting. It's a don't play loose shots and make sure you are difficult to get out. So that was part of my plan anyway, I suppose… It was just… I was a bit more negative because I was afraid to get out, rather than just trying to bat… Especially after he has just berated the people who have got out before you, for playing stupid shots. It gives you a bit of fear – ohh, I don't want to play a shot like that, because then he'll [David] be like that with me – so, that made me play in a bit more of a negative way

Semi-structured interview with Lawrence (29th July 2018)

> I think he [David] was kind of making… I think giving the aims and the targets for the people who were going to go in to bat and the rest of the team… But then also making the top order reflect on how we have got out. You know, what that effect is on the game, and how that has changed the way we are going to try and go about it and win… He's kind of made you realise a bit of how me getting out there affected our chances of winning the game. So I'm thinking about kind of … how likely we would have [been to]… won [win] if I had stayed in an extra 20 overs and stuff, and how that would have released pressure for the lower order [batters]... It just made me think like after this team talk… thinking about if I played in the next game how I was going to go about playing… How important those targets are to win the game. How… you've not just got to play well but you've got to think about how you play and a bit more of the kind of strategic and mental side of it

Semi-structured interview with Derek (30th July 2018)

These excerpts depict the experiences and interpretations of Lawrence, who later went on to bat after this team talk, and Derek, who was one of the batters that had got out playing an aggressive shot. Both batters stated that their inter-actions with David had influenced them in some way. It could be said that David's words (acting on behalf of the norm circle) and athletes' conscious reflections on these words had strengthened the dispositions (connections between neurons and synapses) relating to these role norms for Lawrence and Derek (Elder-Vass, 2007b). Further, Lawrence stated that he later consciously attempted to play in a more conservative manner, in alignment with the role norms of batters for these match circumstances, after previous examples of playing in an irresponsible manner had been criticised by David. For Derek, David's team talk had served to make him reflect on his decisions, and how he would need to more closely align with the plans as set out by the coaches in upcoming matches, due to the consequence that playing otherwise could have on the organisation's ability to win matches. It would appear that David had made Derek recognise that 'the productive capacity of the organisation depends on *both* the workers *and* the relations between them that exist when they are organised as they are' (Elder-Vass, 2010a, p. 155).

The theorisation of norm circles presented in this section challenges and extends previous explanations of influence in coaching. Positivist work has typically portrayed the influence of coaching as a straightforward, rational and linear endeavour. For example, where coaches utilise controlling behaviours (e.g., acting in a coercive, threatening or authoritarian way, criticising and

instructing to convey expectations), research has suggested that this is likely to directly forestall intrinsic motivation, the capacity to self-regulate and wellbeing in athletes through negating their basic psychological needs (Bartholomew et al., 2009). Conversely, the present account, including an explanation of the influence of norm circles and conscious reflexivity, provides a more subtle and sophisticated exploration of *how* coaching practice influences others. For example, where coaches (act on behalf of norm circles or the organisation to) endorse or enforce specific normative practices this can shape dispositions or beliefs, which agents are then able to conform with or deviate from in light of their conscious reflexivity. Rather than the instruction and feedback delivered by David (in the above examples) merely contributing to an accumulative tally which is then correlated to particular athlete outcome measures, this work provides a connection between detailed in-situ practice and how this might influence the immediate and future (inter)actions of athletes. These sophisticated chronological connections present a novel contribution to the coaching literature, as opposed to simply viewing athlete 'outcomes' as a constant conjunction or by-product of isolated coach behaviour, as if coaching is a sequential process of cause and effect (Jones et al., 2016).

6.3.3 *The proximal endorsement of local role norms*

Clearly, as well as endorsing and enforcing more general role norms (as indicated in section 6.3.2), the organisation studied also (through its members) implemented *local* role norms which were specific to the squad, and, as such, could be tailored to suit specific principles of play (Elder-Vass, 2010a). Typically, these local norms were deployed in an attempt to increase the likelihood of the organisation achieving its operational objectives (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993), and increasing its productive capacity (Elder-Vass, 2010a). Importantly, given the changeable nature of working conditions which faced those who enacted roles (e.g., coaches and athletes being required to respond to the performance of the opposition), these role norms were often, but not always, relative to specific contextual circumstances (e.g., under specific spells or periods of the match). It could be said, then, that these role norms were implemented by coaches (acting on behalf of the organisation) in an attempt to reduce, manage or orchestrate some of the ambiguity, pathos

and irony which was evident in their environment (Jones & Wallace, 2005). Even the local role norms could be further split up into those role norms which applied to all athletes in the context, and those which only applied to a subset of athletes (e.g., athletes who were batting in specific match circumstances) within the organisation (Elder-Vass, 2010a).

Throughout my time spent in the field, I noticed that one of the strategies used by David and his coaching team was to pin posters of the teams' plans to the walls of changing rooms (Figures 1.7 - 2.0), in an attempt to reinforce some of these more local role norms (alongside general role norms). The plans for the two-day matches were put into place by the coaching staff, while players were consulted for their opinions on the one-day match targets. Here, players were asked what they felt the necessary standards were to perform well, before coaches mediated these responses. Lists for both two- and one-day matches were then typed up by the team manager, Douglas, and displayed as posters on the changing room walls:

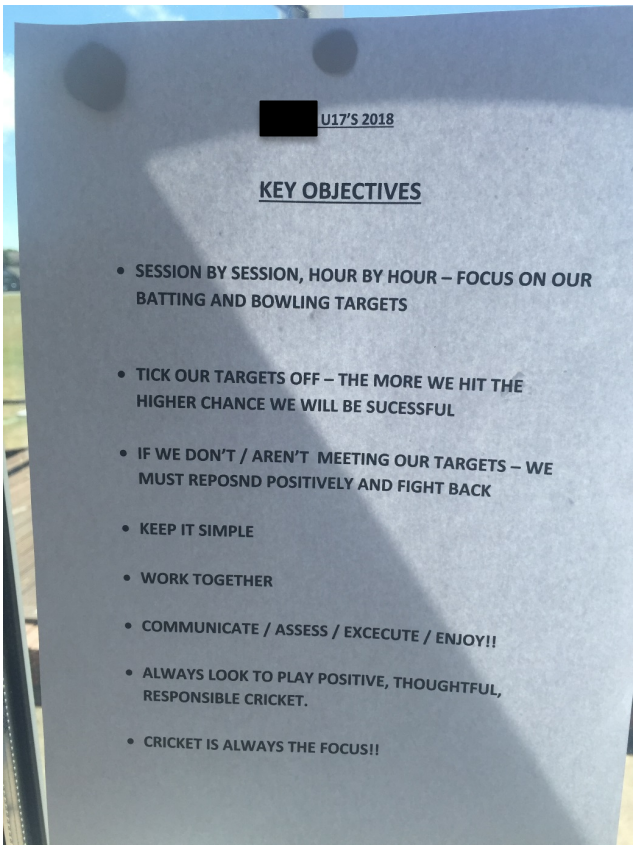
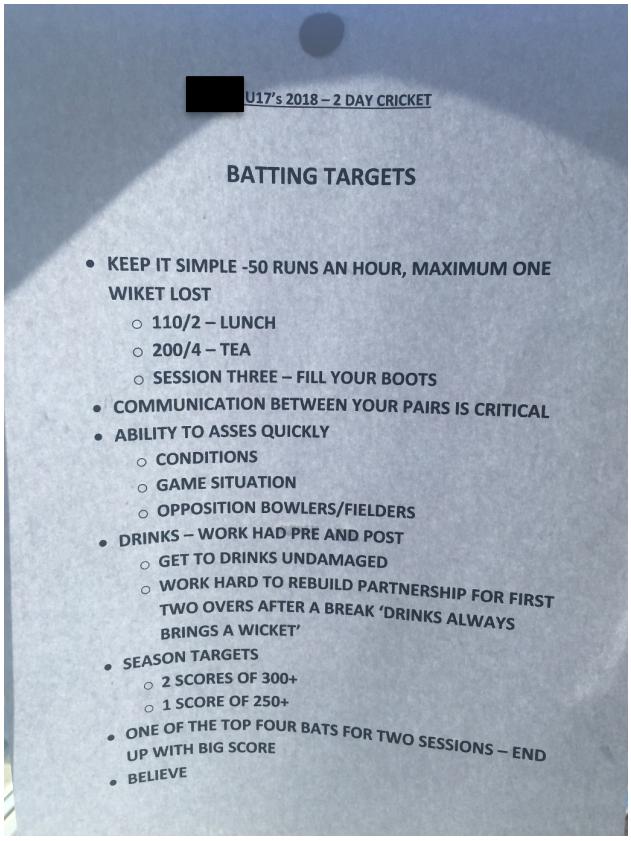


Figure 1.7 Overall two-day format team objectives

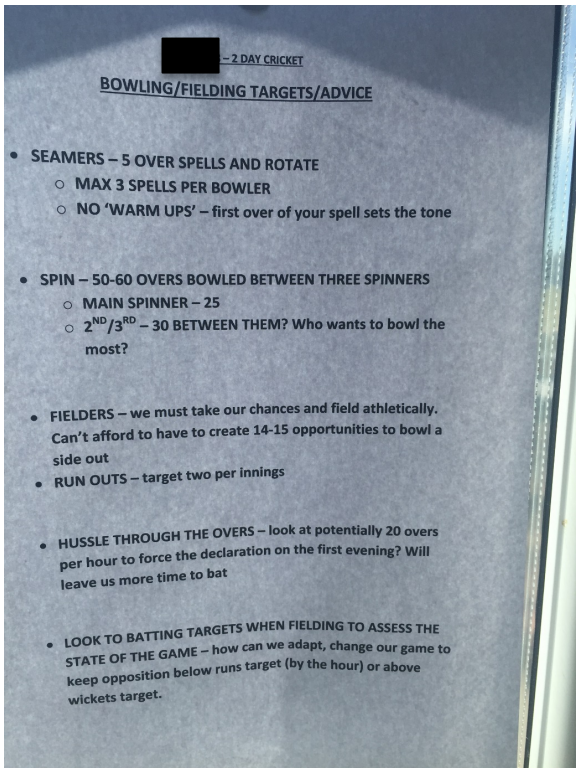


[redacted] U17's 2018 – 2 DAY CRICKET

BATTING TARGETS

- KEEP IT SIMPLE -50 RUNS AN HOUR, MAXIMUM ONE WIKET LOST
  - 110/2 – LUNCH
  - 200/4 – TEA
  - SESSION THREE – FILL YOUR BOOTS
- COMMUNICATION BETWEEN YOUR PAIRS IS CRITICAL
- ABILITY TO ASSES QUICKLY
  - CONDITIONS
  - GAME SITUATION
  - OPPOSITION BOWLERS/FIELDERS
- DRINKS – WORK HAD PRE AND POST
  - GET TO DRINKS UNDAMAGED
  - WORK HARD TO REBUILD PARTNERSHIP FOR FIRST TWO OVERS AFTER A BREAK 'DRINKS ALWAYS BRINGS A WICKET'
- SEASON TARGETS
  - 2 SCORES OF 300+
  - 1 SCORE OF 250+
- ONE OF THE TOP FOUR BATS FOR TWO SESSIONS – END UP WITH BIG SCORE
- BELIEVE

Figure 1.8 Two-day format batting objectives



[redacted] – 2 DAY CRICKET

BOWLING/FIELDING TARGETS/ADVICE

- SEAMERS – 5 OVER SPELLS AND ROTATE
  - MAX 3 SPELLS PER BOWLER
  - NO 'WARM UPS' – first over of your spell sets the tone
- SPIN – 50-60 OVERS BOWLED BETWEEN THREE SPINNERS
  - MAIN SPINNER – 25
  - $2^{ND}/3^{RD}$ – 30 BETWEEN THEM? Who wants to bowl the most?
- FIELDERS – we must take our chances and field athletically. Can't afford to have to create 14-15 opportunities to bowl a side out
- RUN OUTS – target two per innings
- HUSSLE THROUGH THE OVERS – look at potentially 20 overs per hour to force the declaration on the first evening? Will leave us more time to bat
- LOOK TO BATTING TARGETS WHEN FIELDING TO ASSESS THE STATE OF THE GAME – how can we adapt, change our game to keep opposition below runs target (by the hour) or above wickets target.

Figure 1.9 Two-day format bowling and fielding objectives

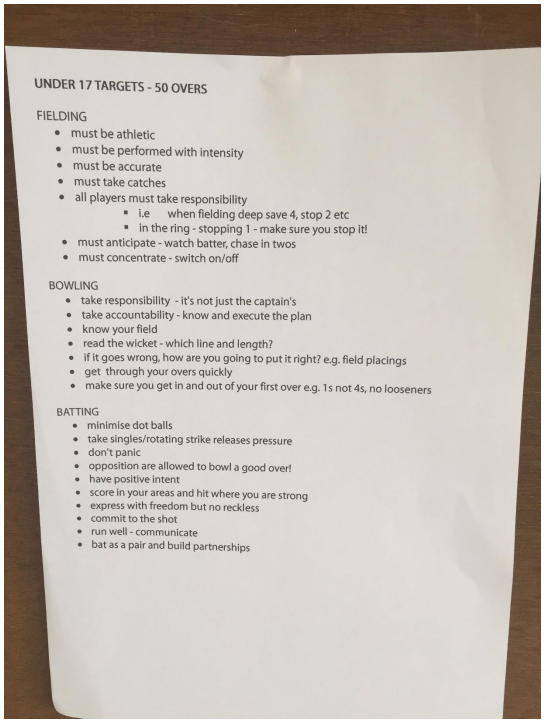


Figure 2.0 Objectives for one-day matches

Of note here is that within 'literate societies, it is a combination of the influence of people and texts that produce tendencies for individuals to live according to particular cultural standards' (Elder-Vass, 2012a, p. 45). Importantly, then, there is a need to understand the role that such texts play in causally influencing action.

Popper (1979) referred to "World 3 knowledge" whereby knowledge can exist in an independent, objective sense, outside of a knowing subject (e.g., in books or documents stored in libraries). Indeed, he positioned the objective moment of culture in a collective archive and not in collective consciousness (Elder-Vass, 2012a). Elder-Vass problematised this concept and suggested that texts do not contain knowledge as such. Instead, they contain *potential* knowledge. The informational content to texts, then, is only able to be actualised in the presence of a reader or interpreter. A text (i.e., the posters depicted in Figures 1.7 - 2.0) 'has the causal power to stimulate a range of possible senses of its meaning' and 'the realization [sic] of such meaning always occurs in a process of interaction between the book and the linguistic/cultural preconceptions of the reader' (Archer & Elder-Vass, 2012, p. 105). Thus:

> 'it is not enough for an idea to be decodable from a text for it to be part of a culture, at least in the sense of culture at issue here; it is only those ideas that are also collectively endorsed that shape our practices, rituals, and institutions' (Elder-Vass, 2012a, p. 46).

Scholars interested in the influence of discourse on the actions of coaching stakeholders have frequently failed to fully acknowledge this point; they have often overlooked an explanation of *how* discourse can causally influence. For instance, many poststructuralist researchers have drawn upon the work of Foucault (e.g., Denison, 2007; Denison & Avner, 2011; Denison, Mills, & Konoval, 2017) to understand the production of knowledge through discourse. Here, Denison (2007), for example, valuably deconstructed his reading as a coach of an athlete's poor performance through a Foucaldian lens. However, Foucault's account fails to recognise *how* discourse can have a causal effect (i.e., it fails to recognise the mechanism through which discourse can influence the actions of agents) and *how* this can be reconciled with the causal capability of human agents (Elder-Vass, 2012a). Consequently, in line with the explanation of how discourse can influence action (through norm circles and conscious reflexivity) presented by Elder-Vass (2012a), I now explore some of the (inter)actions (and interpretations of these) which took place around (local) role norms in the present study.

> I think because the kids knew that, at the first drinks break the plan was to be 50 [runs] for one [wicket], so if we were anywhere near that then that was a massive success. Erm, and there was one day in particular where we ended up at XXXXXXX [name of cricket ground], and we ended up, after tea, erm being over 300 [runs] for four wickets, which was actually better than what we had actually planned, and then the lads could just go out and play totally freely, and er, that was our best day of cricket ever, I think. Err, since I have been involved in the 17's, and it was because he [David] had set out very clear plans and the kids were able to follow it. But the, the feedback from the kids was that it was easier because they had a clear vision of what we were looking for, and erm, and at the end of each over when the batsmen met, for example, they could look at the scoreboard and they could see, you know, whether they needed to adjust what they were doing, or whether they were on target and they found that really helpful, you know. And he had the same – he had plans for when we were bowling, erm, five overs, 30 balls, 30 of our best balls, erm, and we had targets for what erm, what that would look like in terms of figures and stuff like that.
>
> Semi-structured interview with Douglas (4th February 2018)

> I think that [setting plans for the players] was the difference, I think that is why we won the championship last year, was because erm, we had very, very clear plans and the kids knew it. All the plans were on display in the changing rooms so they knew exactly what was expected of them – they could go and look at them at any time. If we were giving feedback we could use them to – as the criteria – to say how did we do

> here? We should have been 100 [runs] for two [wickets] at lunch or whatever it was, err, where were we? We had lost too many wickets, or whatever, or we are above target etcetera, and it was just *really* good. I think that was good.
>
> Semi-structured interview with Douglas (4th February 2018)

Douglas here referred to how he perceived the plans (displayed on the walls of the changing room and observed, endorsed and enforced by those within the organisation) to allow athletes to come to terms with what the coaches would be looking out for and what successful role performance looked like (Corsby & Jones, 2020). In other words, Douglas felt that the norms laid out provided athletes with an opportunity to orchestrate (Raabe et al., 2017) (i.e., by assessing how well the team were doing in relation to their goals and what needed to be done in order to attempt to achieve them). The local role norms typically referred to *principles of play* or *game plans* which were specific to the organisation (e.g., when to play more attackingly or defensively, who should bowl when and how). Clearly, these local role norms related, in some cases, to more general role norms (i.e., in order to achieve them, players needed to remain responsible, accountable, and apply effort). The noticing strategies of coaches (paying attention to performance in line with the role norms set out) were then used as a basis for endorsement and enforcement at team talks. The following excerpts from different matches are indicative of this endorsement and enforcement:

> Before the first game of the season – a two-day friendly match against a neighbouring county – David addresses the squad in the changing rooms to reinforce the plans and expectations:
>
> *David:* 'These [the plans] are gonna be on the walls of [the changing rooms] of each of the games that we play in to remind you. And what we'll do at the end of the day – it's easy for me to have a debrief with you all because we'll just go through it, and if we're 40 runs for four [wickets] after hour one that's something that we have to address the next time… So session-by-session, hour-by-hour focus on the batting [and] bowling targets – that's fairly straight forward… Moving onto the bowling, seamers five over spells, maximum three spells, no warm-ups [poor deliveries], the first over sets the tone… Spin… 50 to 60 [overs] between three spinners, main spinner [will bowl] 25 [overs]. Second and third [spinners] 30 [overs] between them – who wants to bowl the most. Fielders, take our chances, field athletically, with the intensity… Batting targets, keep it simple. 50 runs an hour, maximum one wicket lost… Communicating between your pairs is crucial, alright – you assessing what the bowlers are doing'.
>
> *Field note extract (03 July 2018)*

Nettleton CC are 73 runs for the loss of no wickets, batting first in day one of their first competitive two-day home match of the season. At the drinks break Sam speaks to the batters:

Sam: 'Just remember what our plan was – 50 [runs] after the first hour, 17 overs gone – we are above where we want to be. [There is] pace off the ball now there though isn't there? You kna [know], you [John] have played three reckless shots off the first three balls that you faced. You know what I mean? You have just got to *keep* batting time. You will get a bad ball… You have just got to be patient, and this is where we have to learn the game now. This stage of the game against the slow bowling, especially you's [batters] going in [next]. You kna, you have just got to be patient and wait for the bad ball, but can we just manipulate the field, just work it [the ball] round a little bit into the gaps, we diven't [don't] have to be hitting fours, playing big shots… Straight after drinks we work doubly hard now to 20, to 20 overs. Just working, unless you get a bad ball, but you kna, we grind them [the opposition] into, we diven't give them a lift straight after drinks, you kna what I mean, this is *really*, *really* important'.

Field note extract (17 July 2018)

Nettleton CC are bowling first in day one of their second competitive two-day home match of the season. At the first drinks break, the opposition are 34 runs for the loss of one wicket. After providing the players with their drinks David provides his thoughts to the whole team:

David: Right, lads – just gather round a bit. Well done. So that's a – I think that's a good first hour… Right, they [the opposition] haven't getten away from us [put themselves in a good position by scoring a high number of runs]. We've bowled quite… with a little bit of discipline. Alright. The only thing I'll say for the next hour, right, is that… on days like today when it [the pitch] is flat and it's a little bit warm and you know, we're gonna have to work really hard to bowl these lads out, aren't we? Every single chance [to get a wicket] we have to take. So at the minute we have missed a catch and a run-out, alright. Micah, [if] that's a better throw that's out isn't it? [Micah nods in response]. Alright, you have got to be really harsh on yourself… So let's make sure in the next hour, the only thing that I can see really is if we get a chance let's take it, right, because it's just a good bit of cricket, right, or a shit shot and a good catch, then a good ball – the game is wide open because they haven't got away from us at all…'

Field note extract (24 July 2018)

Nettleton CC are 64 runs for the loss of no wickets, batting first in day one of their first competitive two-day away match. At the drinks break David addresses the batters:

David: [Talking to the two batters who are coming in to bat next and have joined David for the drinks break talk] 'What do you notice about the play? Every single ball – I'll tell you – every single ball has gone along the floor. [The] control has been really impressive…' [Now addressing the two batters who are currently batting] 'I think that's a great start. Control is good. Fast outfield. Alright, you are playing in the right areas... So remember what we talked about in the winter about that challenge – about the bowlers holding their line [bowling in the same area consistently]. Well they [the opposition] have gone looking [for wickets] a little bit haven't they? Which has then fuckin' led to you – your opportunities [to score from the bowling]. Remember, I

> know we are not – there is little incentives you have got here – yeah it gets you off to a good start, but let's not stop now, let's give us a couple of overs… Right, get yourselves back in [cricket jargon meaning play conservatively after the drinks break to re-attune to the conditions], you've got 50 minutes until tea. Just keep grafting and just keep them [the opposition] down… Great start. Great start… Keep going lads, enjoy yourselves. Brilliant. Well done.'
>
> *Field note extract (31 July 2018)*

In these examples, David and Sam had acted to endorse and enforce the local role norms which had been set out (as in the posters adorning the walls of the changing rooms). These (inter)actions were underpinned by what the coaches had noticed in terms of how, specifically, the role norms had (or had not) been enacted; observation formed the basis of making their noticing understandable to the athletes through the provision of feedback (Corsby & Jones, 2020). David and Sam had variously praised conformity and criticised non-conformity with norms in an attempt to orchestrate and increase the likelihood of their desired goals for performance being operationalised (Jones et al., 2013). In this regard, stakeholders of the coaching context:

> may support the norm by advocating the practice, by praising or rewarding those who enact it, by criticising or punishing those who fail to enact it, or even just by ostentatiously enacting it themselves. The consequence of such endorsement and enforcement is that the members of the circle know that they face a systematic incentive to enact the practice (Elder-Vass, 2010a, p. 124).

Within semi-structured interviews, athletes too, referred to these plans and (inter)actions surrounding them in light of how they were perceived:

> I think… it made me think about, you know how, what my game plan when I was gonna go out there [was]. [Coaches were] on about communication before, so me and Micah were probably more inclined to speak about it – to speak about the game plan – before we went out there… So more about like what our plan was when we got out there. What we were gonna be like for the first 10 overs, 20 overs, what was our target, and you know how we were gonna go about it.
>
> Semi-structured interview with Derek (30th July 2018)

> The coaching, they wanted us to do [it] step-by-step, like… what was it, like 100 runs for two [wickets] or something at [drinks]. Yeah, he [David] had plans and it's more the mental side in a two-day game because it's like how long you can last for, batting, like because you are supposed to be batting [as a team] for like a day… If you can do well for the first day it determines the rest of the game… It's [the plans] give[n] us [me] an idea of what it's like to play more overs cricket [two-day matches]… Well I think [if the plans hadn't of been in place], people would just try to go out there and bat like it was a 20 over game or a 50 over game. They're [the coaches] actually telling you what you need to do like for the first session, you need to get like a hundred [runs] or something, till like lunch, you get like a hundred [runs] for two

> [wickets] and like it just sets you up for the rest of the game… The top order [batters] like set it up for the bottom order. Like they'll start it off and give you the base, and then we go on and try and get the final runs towards the end.
>
> Semi-structured interview with Alan (30th August 2018)

> Erm… it was just gentle reminders, really – erm, just to get you going. Like reminding us that we don't need to go and play a shot a ball [play aggressively]. We have got 87 overs to bat, and I think that's kind of maybe Sam's role in the coaching [team]. Not like the technical side of the game. Just being there, constantly reminding us that – what we need to do – what is expected of us, I think. Whereas David is kind of looking at how we are going to do it. Sam is kind of just telling us what we need to do in order to have the best chance of winning the game… Like we know what is expected of us by knowing what is expected of the batsmen out there [who are currently batting]. So it was just like reminding us patience is the key and that, like it's easy to forget that you just need to keep being patient.
>
> Semi-structured interview with Roger (23rd July 2018)

> They [coaches] pretty much, throughout the full day, they always just relay the messages. It's pretty much just stick to the basics. Make sure, like I say you keep the pressure on them [the opposition]. I already knew the targets, cos I knew every hour it should be like 50 [runs] for one [wicket], 100 [runs] for two [wickets in the next hour]… But as a bowler I was already thinking I know they are batting first so by drinks I don't want them to be 50 [runs] for one [wicket]… I knew that I needed to not let them get any runs… It's a case of if he [David] sets them [the plans] out clear before the game – and he had bits of paper on windows and on the wall and everything, saying err, this is the plan… I might have forgotten, but I'll go and check on the wall… I need to bowl a tidy spell – take wickets but like try and keep the runs down… When we started batting, err – I think it was Derek got out pretty early on – I think we were maybe five [runs] for one [wicket]. Erm, like he [David] said it probably wasn't the best shot really. But as err, Matthew was walking in to bat… I think it was David shouted "just stick in – play positively, but take your time". And then, even though I was batting lower down in the order – and there was a few other lads batting lower down the order – they all knew what they had do to. So, saying I wouldn't go out first ball and try and cart it out the park [play very aggressively and try and hit the ball out of the ground]. So, that just made me think about, if I am going to go in to bat, what am I going to do here? How am I going to play? Where am I going to score?...
>
> Semi-structured interview with Connor (6th July 2018)

These excerpts from athletes would suggest that the plans and role norms that were put into place (through being enacted, enforced and endorsed), had shaped the way in which athletes had subsequently (inter)acted, and thought about (inter)acting in the future - through both conscious and unconscious means. Individuals came to know what expected behaviours were and the pattern of incentives that their behaviour was likely to confront. Athletes had internalised past pressures in the form of dispositions or beliefs, which tended to encourage the enactment of the practices concerned (Elder-Vass, 2010a). Here, athletes acted differently to what they would have done had they not been part of the broader organisation.

> 'When a role incumbent does act in the role, she adopts behaviours that have been specified by the organisation, as a result of acquiring a normative belief or disposition: the belief that role incumbents ought to act as specified by the norms that make up their role' (Elder-Vass, 2010a, p. 158).

While interpretivist-informed studies (e.g., Cushion & Jones, 2006) have provided an insight into the embodiment of cultural practices and norms (i.e., masculine, hierarchical and autocratic discourse) within coaching squads, these studies have not attempted to theorise the mechanism through which norms are able to causally influence the behaviour of human agents. Resultantly, questions which remain under-theorised in coaching include: at what level of social structure do norms exist and how do norms causally influence the actions of agents (i.e., what is the mechanism though which norms, alongside the conscious reflexivity of agents, can influence the actions of athletes)? As such, this thesis provides a novel and important contribution to the coaching corpus. Namely, in the last few sections, Elder-Vass' theorising has been utilised as a heuristic device to provide one possible explanation that norm circles (through the interactions of agents) store dispositions or beliefs within the neural networks of agents (through the individual internalising past pressures) and thus unconsciously influence action, alongside the capacity of agents to consciously think and reflect before acting (Elder-Vass, 2010a).

Now that some of the broader (general and local) role norms of the context studied have been introduced, in the following sections I explore specific (temporal) empirical examples of how these norms were created, reproduced, enforced, endorsed and *enacted* (or not) in-situ. I also closely examine social events whereby these norms had (or had not) appeared to play a role (through norm circles alongside other entities) in causally influencing the actions of agents. In addition, I introduce further *local* role norms which were implemented by coaches (acting on behalf of the organisation) at specific time points and were relevant to specific contextual (e.g., match) circumstances. The succeeding sections, then, aim to put the work of *retrodiction* into action (Lawson, 1997). In line with a realist model of social ontology this process involves 'identifying the mechanisms at work so that we can use our understandings of these mechanisms as building blocks to construct explanations of actual events' (Elder-Vass, 2010a, p. 169). In doing so,

I will critically examine, even more closely, *how*, *when*, *why*, and *under which circumstances* coaching practice had (or had not) influenced the actions of others. Specifically, the examples focus on micro-social events and are again explained through deploying the theoretical frames of *orchestration* (Jones & Wallace, 2005, 2006), *norm circles*, *emergentism*, and *the causal power of social structures* (Elder-Vass, 2007, 2010a, 2012a).

6.4 The importance of noticing for social structure to causally influence the actions and behaviours of agents

The purpose of this section is to explore the means through which individual athletes are able to be influenced (or not) by their (inter)actions with others. The present section thus builds upon the theorisation of mechanisms through which norms can influence athletes as outlined in section 6.3, by exploring some of the necessary pre-conditions for coaches' (inter)actions to causally influence (through norm circles) the subsequent (inter)actions of athletes. The initial stages of my ethnographic work provided an important (and somewhat unexpected) finding which both challenged my assumptions, and provided further critical interpretation of work which had come before this thesis. In a stimulated recall interview with one of the athletes, it was made profoundly clear that the act of *noticing* (Mason, 2002) was important for social structure to be able to causally influence the future actions or behaviours of agents (i.e., athletes). Upon selecting and presenting footage of critical incidents from an indoor session (as described in *Chapter 5: Methodology*) to Lawrence – one of the athletes – fascinating discussions ensued. I now introduce my field notes and draw from ethnographic film pertaining to such specific critical incidents in order to provide sufficient background and contextual information, before turning to and exploring both the coaches' and athletes' discourses surrounding them. The specific incident involving Lawrence described above is discussed in section 6.4.2.

6.4.1 *Coach and athlete noticing*

Throughout my time studying Nettleton CC, David often stood back and observed the actions of athletes in sessions and matches, before making his observations known through interaction with players:

It is the first training session of the indoor programme. In a bitterly cold hall, the lads have completed a warm-up with the strength and conditioning intern consisting of dynamic stretching, jogging and sprinting. Players then move quickly into a catching activity in pairs designed to test each other out. David, the head coach, swiftly reminds the players that the activity is required to be completed at high intensity:

David (head coach): [As players are completing the activity] 'Little bit of time between throws – GOOD FIRM THROWS, JAMIE!... STOP. Right lads. I want you to challenge, right, so this isn't an under 10's session where we are just lolly popping balls to our mate, right. We want you, we want good positions, so it has to be strong, assertive throws, right. Yeah. So we're testing him out, it's not easy, right. Strong positions above your head [alongside a demonstration of best practice]… If you're not challenging yourself, I cannot make you challenge your mate. So, if we are lolly popping it across, we are not getting any better, alright, let's go'.

The catching activity resumes with players appearing to make a concerted effort to demonstrate that they are performing with 'intensity'. At the end of the activity players gather around David, who provides the squad with a stark reminder, at length, which seems to have the intention of leaving cricketers under no illusion that they are expected to work hard and continually apply effort to improve in this squad:

David: 'Everyone as a group… I might come back to this at a certain point – those lads who, erm, were here last year know – and probably we said this at some point last year – all I'm gonna say is, right, your responsibility as a young player, or as a more senior player, your responsibility, right, includes all the cricketing skills that we do, that I'm not sure that you'll engage with. But it is your responsibility to make sure that a) you look after yourself, right, and give yourself the best chance to do as well as you can, right – I'm seeing a few people when they are doing the physical stuff cutting corners. Right. I'm seeing people, when we're doing the catching stuff taking the easy way out – throwing the ball off balance, throwing the ball at the wrong time. Alright. I'm seeing people cut out on the skipping. I'm seeing people cut out on the squats, the lunges. Doing the *least* necessary. Believe me, right, when I was your age I was one of those people that did the least necessary. And if I had a different attitude, then I would have gone a lot further with my cricket. Right, if you want to do the least necessary, that's absolutely fine – I don't care – because I still go home at 12 o'clock. Right, you're not cheating me, but the problem is those lads [who] miss out and do the least required will be the ones that will do the least required on the pitch. And it'll be the ones that can't get past 20 [runs]. And the ones that wonder why they miss straight ones [get out]. And it'll be the ones that can't bowl it econom[ically], you know, in the right place time after time. The reason why you are asked to do this stuff – there is a purpose for it – we don't just make it up on the spot. Right, so the catching, the feeding, your position where you are in, right, you have to understand that we need to be set, we need to be balanced, we need to be in a good enough position to make that catch. Whether or not we are asking you to do the hokey cokey before you catch it. Right. If we are asking you to do five press-ups, we want to see you try your very best to push five press-ups out. Not two and a half with your arse in the air… Right. So we see that. Right. And that's not – that doesn't have an effect – well it does have an effect on your cricket. That doesn't mean to say that you're a bad player. What it means is that you are quite happy to cut the corners. And that tells me if we are taking you away [on tour] for three days to be part of the team, you're gonna cut a corner just cos it is easier for you. Whereas, if you're gonna be involved in higher level cricket, you can't do that. So the responsibility is on you. If you come at 10 o'clock, brilliant. You have got to give it two hours, and you have got to give it your best shot… Right, if you're quite happy to go away every two hours, every week, and nothing is aching – right – that tells me that you probably haven't worked hard enough. You should be coming out knowing that you have done a two-hour session, not thinking that you

> have done, you know, the odd squat here, and the odd squat there, and the odd catch there. Right, because you are going to be tested further in twenty minutes time, and then you are going to be expected to practice just as well as you would have done without doing a bit of physical exertion, and a little bit of work… Because, this is what makes a good cricketer… … And if you are not willing to put the yards in, not willing to do as much as your mate, right – if you want to watch someone, just watch Jamie – fittest lad in the group by an absolute mile. Why? Because he does the work, he does the work – he does his sprints and he takes a little bit of pride in it… So you have to take that responsibility on yourself. I can't do that for you, Douglas can't, Sam can't, Timmy can't… You have got to take that responsibility on yourself and you have to do the work. Because it is noticed. And I tell you what, right, if you don't do it now, or the next week, or the week after we'll notice it in err, in July. The lads that do well over three days are the lads that put the graft in, have got the best attitudes, and they take pride in what they are doing'.
>
> *Field note extract (21st January, 2018)*

What was evident from these excerpts was that noticing – the act of reading events or occurrences in order to act (Mason, 2002) – was an integral feature of David's practice as a coach. He used noticing to support and inform his subsequent actions in addressing the squad, and made players explicitly aware that he had noticed events (e.g., a lack of effort applied by some players). In doing so, it could be said that David had made the observation visible, accountable and intelligible to others (Corsby & Jones, 2020). He again attempted to orchestrate in order to manage pathos in that athletes were not putting in expected levels of effort, recognising that this could have an influence on the performance of the team (Jones et al., 2013). Indeed, in a semi-structured interview before the commencement of the indoor programme, David prided himself on his ability to notice the actions of others and felt that this was one of his most effective skills as a coach:

> So it's, I mean, like I notice everything now, so everything in life I notice, so XXXXX [my wife] at home says I notice everything and it's like well I get paid to use me eyes, so I see myself now as like, the person I am, I sit back and I just like, look, and if I kind of make calls on what I see, and then I analyse it, and then I think well how can we make it better. So then I'll set challenges up for the players and say right, why don't we try this and then I'll sit back and I'll watch it again, and then I'll think well he's, they're not good at that, they're not good at this so bring them in, you know we'll talk about what we can maybe better, then you go with them again and then you'll see the improvement there.
>
> Semi-structured interview with David (10th November 2018)

Specifically, when reviewing his address of the squad in a stimulated recall interview, David related to the intentions behind his practice on the back of what he had noticed:

> Erm, again just making them [players] aware of kind of what I've seen… and how that can have an influence on what they do, and what we- what they can do. So I think unless you're an exceptionally talented cricketer, you can work with that, but we haven't got any exceptionally talented cricketers in that group. Micah is the best cricketer, but he is also one of the fittest lads, so there's not an issue. So what I said later on is, at the end of the session, is that I want to take the fitness out, I don't want that to be an issue, so then we can concentrate more on the cricket… … But it's a little bit of frustration in the voice there, you can see where I'm saying right, and you know addressing them. It's in tell mode really and just, you know, making them aware of… it's not acceptable for them to do that [lack effort]. And why should it be, you know, if we want to be shit and lose every game like we have been for years then it's acceptable. But I ain't, that's not my game, that's not what I'm there for… That's not why I'm- they're [Cricket Board] paying us [me] a fortune to go through this qualification [UKCC Master Coach Course]. I'm looking for the lads to kick on, and for them to kick on they need to be better, and they need to better phys- they need to be more, they need to be more physically prepared, and able. Erm, cos if they're not then we'll struggle and I want that- they have to do the work outside, on top of their schoolwork, on top of their club cricket, or whatever they are doing, they have to take pride in it and they have to do it so then we can focus on the skills of the cricket on a Sunday, cos what we shouldn't be having to do man, is put them through their paces and [a] fitness circuit, that takes up half an hour, forty minutes of a 2-hour session. We should be focusing on the cricket.
>
> Stimulated recall interview with David (26th January, 2018)

David's (inter)actions, here, can be interpreted as an attempt to manage the inherent ambiguity (i.e., inability to fully control the actions of athletes) of his context (Jones & Wallace, 2005). In noticing that some athletes were making use of the agency that they retained in the construction of coaching (Jones & Ronglan, 2018), whereby some athletes 'cut corners' or exerted less effort than was expected, David micro-politically acted in attempt to control this misalignment between expected and actual performance standards as far as was possible (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a). Indeed, David eloquently referred to some of the structural vulnerability within his role in that he could not *control* the performances of players. He frequently cited orchestration (e.g., providing players with foundations and knowledge) employed to manage some of this pathos:

> you'll supply the foundations for the player, but the player has to fly himself, so the player has to go and do his [bit]… and, and you cannot control what the player does on a game, but what… all you can do is you can give him the foundations and the understanding of what he needs to do to improve his performance, how he performs is down to him, or her.
>
> Semi-structured interview with David (13th December, 2017)

In this regard, David's micro-political actions served in intending to both create and endorse or enforce the role norms of athletes to apply high levels of effort and accept responsibility for their own actions (Elder-Vass, 2010a). Norms were used by David in order to try and make the

achievement of his goals (i.e., for player development and good physical preparation) for individuals and the squad more likely. This finding adds a novel theorisation of how (i.e., the mechanism through which) coaches orchestrate to manage pathos. Extending beyond the work of Readdy et al. (2016) and Santos et al. (2013) who reported that coaches orchestrate by empowering, instilling confidence in athletes and noticing, the present thesis adds new understanding of key strategies used by coaches to orchestrate in attempt to influence athletes. Specifically, coaches were found to use their noticing to act on behalf of the organisation or norm circle (endorsing or enforcing practice) in the hope that doing so would increase the tendency that an individual would internalise a belief that the relevant behaviour was considered to be the norm. These very actions were nested within David's own perceived role norms (as a head coach), and were influenced by his noticing of the expectations of the organisation whom he worked for (i.e., his perception that the organisation were paying for him to complete the highest level of coach training available, and that they would not expect him to allow players to coast through sessions with minimal effort).

When I probed David around the influence that he felt this talk with the squad had, he identified:

> Well, well, that'll be interesting for you to find out if you ask them [players]. Because it'll [my actions will] have an effect on half of them, half of them'll listen and half of them'll not. I mean you can see John there looking at the floor. You know what I mean, you can engage with some through eye contact and stuff, and you can, you know, it's aimed at him, it's aimed at a couple of others, that you can see aren't physically capable yet. It'll be interesting to see how that develops over the next 5 or 6 weeks really, because if they work hard for 5 or 6 weeks and do things properly, then we should see a difference, say at the start of March time… Middle of March. Erm…
>
> Stimulated recall interview with David (26th January, 2018)

This passage alludes to David's awareness that, as a coach, he was not able to more fully *control* the actions or outcomes of his athletes (Jones et al., 2013), as has been portrayed through the ontological and epistemological assumptions of positivist, rationalistic work in the area (e.g., Fransen et al., 2018; Reinboth & Duda, 2006). Here, the stimulated recall method could be said to have provided an additional 'tool' or layer to aid the noticing mechanisms (Tripp, 1993) of the

coach. Specifically, David noticed the actions of John, interpreted them as meaning that he was not attentive, and thus, that he had not taken on board the messages being delivered. This again relates to the perceived ambiguity inherent within the role of the coach's activity (that coaches cannot expect every athlete to take on board and act upon everything that is said to and asked of them). The excerpt provided by David also illustrates the concept that it is individuals who *notice* the actions of those acting on behalf of norm circles and (may) internalise the normative pressures. Hence, the norm circle does not *directly* cause behaviour; it can shape behaviour through the individual internalising a belief after noticing (and/or reflecting on) previous (inter)action. In Elder-Vass' (2010a, p. 125) own words:

> Normative compliance is not physically forced compliance but voluntary compliance; and hence it is *directly* caused, not by the *existence* in the present of normative pressures from the community, but by the individual's *internalisation* of past pressures in the form of beliefs or dispositions.

Further, the coach's words denote his intention to also 'monitor and respond to evolving circumstances in order to bring about improvement in the individual and collective performance of those being coached' in his orchestrated actions – to see how the fitness of his players developed in the coming weeks and months (Jones & Wallace, 2005, p. 128). Importantly, in keeping with realist conventions for the (ongoing) sampling and choosing of cases to address the research questions (Emmel, 2013), there was a need to also engage with the discourse of the athletes to better understand if and how they, too, noticed and as such may have been influenced by these interactions. In referring to the same excerpt discussed above (whereby David was acting to inform players of his disappointment with some not putting full effort in), one of the athletes, Lawrence, commented:

> Err, when – it just – I find myself really trying to keep concentrating cos he [David] just talks for ages there, and I somet- there's quite a lot of times when I've just gone out to bat or something like that, after my bat there, and I end up- or have a ball in my gloves – I end up dropping it, cos I just forget about other things, because I've just been standing there for ages. Erm, I was feeling alright because when he was talking about people being fitter and that sort of thing, I've been going to a strength and conditioning thing on a Thursday morning and I felt I was working really hard and not cutting the corners and things like that, and I, I was feeling like other people were, so that was pretty good for me, erm, but also when he said – he said something about the

> people who do the best are the people who don't cut the corners – some of the best players in the squad were cutting the corners, so that was just – I didn't agree with that.
>
> Stimulated recall interview with Lawrence (26th January, 2018)

Lawrence, here, depicted that his ability to notice the (inter)actions of the coach was somewhat influenced by the length of time that was taken to get the message across. In consciously reflecting upon the norm (that it was important to be fit), and comparing the normative standards to his own performance, Lawrence interpreted the endorsement and enforcement of the coach in this instance, positively, because he felt that he had himself conformed to the norm (Elder-Vass, 2010a). Observation, in this sense, had become an 'interactional accomplishment', whereby the feedback from the coach had provided a structuring tool for performance, permitting athletes to more closely appreciate and reflect upon 'what the coaches wanted to see in action', as well as how they perceived themselves to have performed in relation to this (Corsby & Jones, 2020, p. 7). For Lawrence, he had appeared to internalise past pressures (including this interaction with David) in the form of a belief that exerting high levels of effort was necessary (Elder-Vass, 2010a).

Additionally, Lawrence also referred to the actions of others in interpreting adherence to the norm. Lawrence disagreed with David that it was the weaker players who were cutting corners. In other words, there was ambiguity created by differences in beliefs between the coach and athlete (Raabe et al., 2017). This demonstrated that it was not just the head coach's actions which influenced the norm or perceptions of actions which were deemed to align with the norm. It was also athletes' noticing (i.e., the actions of others) which served to influence perceptions of what constituted conformity to the norm. Interestingly, regardless of the fact that Lawrence had noticed and interpreted the actions of 'some of the best players in the squad' cutting corners, he continued to conform to the norm of exerting high levels of effort. This would imply that in unconsciously referring to his habitus (and the belief that it was necessary to exert high levels of effort), irrespective of the actions of others (in not applying effort), Lawrence decided that it would be more beneficial for him to continue to strategically act in alignment with the norm (Elder-Vass, 2007b). For the other athletes (who had failed to apply sufficient effort), their behaviour could be explained by the fact that, despite perhaps having internalised a tendency to comply with the norm:

a) they had other conflicting normative motivations, b) they believed that the norm could be transgressed without being detected, or c) strong emotion drives interfered with the tendency and led to it not being realised (Elder-Vass, 2010a).

In making sense of what he perceived David's intentions to be in delivering this practice, Lawrence went on to say:

> Erm, sort of make sure that people knew we were there to practice and work hard, not just eh, be there and turn up. I suppose it shows the people in the year below there is a change in the cricket, it could get harder, erm, and try and make people work hard in the next half an hour of the session. I also think when he said the next half an hour we're gonna work really hard, he sort of framed it in a way that made it sound like it wasn't gonna be very good fun for the next half an hour… Erm, I suppose it helps people to see that it's sort of hard cricket that he's playing – I think he's, he's got that idea. Erm, and he wants people to become fitter, work harder and become better players, so I suppose that links in.
>
> Stimulated recall interview with Lawrence (26th January, 2018)

Here, Lawrence had demonstrated that he was sufficiently able to read and understand the role norms of his context relating to the exertion of effort. This was not an idea which existed externally to Lawrence, however; it was developed in and through his interactions with coaches and other athletes (Elder-Vass, 2012a). In reading the actions of others (i.e., the words put forward by David to endorse and enforce the norm) and making the decision to act in this way, it would appear that this value or belief had been causally influenced by the norm circle and stored (or strengthened) in his habitus as a normatively aligned disposition, to a degree which enabled him to continue to act in a way which aligned to the norm of the organisation (Elder-Vass, 2012b). Previous work has highlighted the importance of relationships with others (i.e., teammates) for athletes to navigate pathos (Raabe et al., 2017). The present finding adds a novel theorisation to the literature in terms of *how* athletes are able to use relationships with teammates and reading of normative pressures to navigate pathos. For instance, Lawrence above highlighted that he experienced ambiguity between his own and the head coach's views about which athletes were 'cutting corners' in training, and as such, what constituted expected levels of effort. However, in noticing the levels of effort exerted by his teammates (over time) and the expected (normatively endorsed) levels of fitness, he was able to navigate this pathos. His conscious reflexivity and

(normatively influenced) dispositions together, had allowed him to sufficiently read and act in conformity with the norm in a manner which avoided punishment or criticism (in his eyes).

Lawrence also highlighted his perceptions on the effectiveness of David's practice, reflecting on the recall video:

> Erm, I think the first, the first 20-30 seconds [of David's talk to the squad] I thought was effective and I was with him, and then after that I think it just sort of – c'mon let me go – I want to get playing again type of thing.
>
> Stimulated recall interview with Lawrence (26th January, 2018)

Interestingly, this may imply that, for some athletes, there is perhaps a 'window of opportunity' in which coaches' actions are more likely to be *noticed* (and be more likely to causally influence beliefs about norms and thus action through habitus). Further, this interaction provides empirical evidence to support the claim made in previous work that coaches' intentions behind their actions do not always fully match up with the actual influence generated (in the eyes of the athlete), and that this opens up the potential for practice to have unintended consequences (Jones et al., 2013). As such, stimulated recall may be uniquely positioned as a research method to offer insights into the noticing of coaches and athletes in this regard. Although the first 20-30 seconds of David's interactions were perceived to be effective, Lawrence indicated that his attention had drifted after this point, and his ability to notice the information being relayed was somewhat reduced. Further, Lawrence indicated that while David's intention to make the players aware that they were expected to work hard had been mutually understood, in his eyes, the message delivered also positioned the upcoming serious work (training) in the session as being less enjoyable or fun – it served to reinforce a dichotomy between fun and 'serious' training (Avner, Denison, & Markula, 2019).

6.4.2 *Coaching practice going unnoticed*

Later in the same session, another critical incident initially appeared to provide what was in my eyes a somewhat innocuous and routine feature of the coaching context studied, but nonetheless an important event to attempt to explain in terms of the potential influence on the athlete:

> The squad split into four separate lanes of netting practice [practice which simulates full match play, with batters and bowlers, but without fielders, and a net to stop the ball instead]. Lanes one and four have two batters and pace [fast] bowlers bowling at

> them. Lanes two and three have spin-bowlers bowling at the batters. Lane two also has a corrugated mat purposefully placed on the floor, right in front of the batter, to simulate a used cricket pitch and allow the spin bowlers to generate more spin from the floor. This better replicates the 'real life' match environment, compared to the otherwise level and generally predictable surface. Standing on the top of the gallery, speaking to a few of the parents, I feel and sense a desire in players to impress the coaches. Perhaps the role played by social structure may have been causally influencing players (through having previously stored dispositions/beliefs) to behave in different ways compared to if they were training in an environment which was not part of a broader organisation, I thought (i.e., if players were instead simply training among friends, for example).
>
> Dylan comes to the top of his mark in spin lane two [is ready to bowl]. The left-arm spin bowler approaches the crease and bowls a ball which lands perfectly in one of the grooves of the corrugated mat, making the ball deviate wildly from its normal path. The ball spins quickly away from the batter who has by now come down the wicket to try and hit the ball, but instead misses it. With the batsmen left stranded out of his crease, Lawrence – the wicket-keeper – takes a full-stretch one-handed catch and then hits the stumps with the ball in his hand to 'stump' the batter. The batter is out. This is swiftly recognised as good practice by David, the head coach, who communicates his pleasure:
>
> *David:* [shouting loudly across the hall] *"*Lawrence that's brilliant, well done [prolonged clapping]!"
>
> *Field note extract (21st January, 2018)*

In showing this segment of ethnographic film back to David to ask him about his intentions in using this behaviour, he went on to discuss:

> well it was like, I think it [the ball] turned quite quickly, it was like a one-handed take [catch] that he got in his webbing [the end of the wicket keeping gloves], and it was really good, but you could tell that he knew it was really good cos he had a fucking massive smile on his face, ha ha… so yeah, just seeing that, observation, same thing, praising it, and praising the fact that it was good – it was excellent work, erm that maybe on another day would have gone right, probably over his right shoulder. So again it's seeing it from afar but obviously making… I think you know I do that, like that, because I make a point of letting everybody know that it was good, so that gives him a little bit more of a kick, because I've said his name and then everyone can hear and that's quite purposeful I think
>
> Stimulated recall interview with David (26th January, 2018)

David, here, referred to a knowledge that his actions in praising this example of good performance (alongside observation of the performance itself) were intended to endorse and enforce the norm for high performance (i.e., to take wickets). A reading of this data through the lens of Elder-Vass (2010a) would suggest that David was orchestrating by praising or rewarding the enactment of a norm to increase the awareness of (other) members in the organisation that they

faced a systematic incentive to enact such action (Jones & Wallace, 2006). In doing so, it could also be read as an attempt to increase the spread of support in the event of the norm being enacted by others (i.e., by other players and other coaches). David had noticed what he deemed to be successful performance which conformed to the norm (Mason, 2002). Such noticing underpinned David's micro-political action (praising the athlete and making his observations 'knowable' and 'observable'; Corsby & Jones, 2019), in seeking to endorse and enforce the norm to reduce ambiguity in that athletes could act according to different performance standards in subsequent trials (Elder-Vass, 2012a). In alluding to the perceived influence that his actions had on Lawrence, here, David implied:

> Well, it probably made him smile a bit more, but you know, it shows that, it showed decent technique actually – good position, good hands, you know good head position, didn't move away from the ball, dipped his left shoulder in to get his right hand up if you know what I mean… and then he brung the stumps down as well so I think he stumped him. Brilliant. Erm, like high standard keeping that, that's what you want… I'd like to think he felt fucking good, cos it was good work, so he was happy with what he'd done and probably even happier with the fact that somebody (I) had seen it and then recognised that he (I) had seen it in front of the whole group. It's one of them things that you'll mention – see that – you know what I mean.
>
> Stimulated recall interview with David (26th January, 2018)

This passage of text again demonstrates the struggle faced by coaches in fully understanding and comprehending the influence of their actions on others. David selected hedging language in his response here (i.e., 'it *probably* made him smile' and '*I'd like to think* he felt fucking good'). Specifically, David's choice of language resonates with previous work which has reported that coaches often assume their (inter)actions with athletes to have had a positive influence, but then struggle to articulate the means through which this actual influence has been generated (McCallister et al., 2000). Such comments reinforce the need for and importance of the present thesis, in attempting to better understand *how*, *when*, *why*, and *under which circumstances* athletes are indeed influenced by coaches, to inform decision making processes when working with individuals or groups of athletes. Thus, this work has the potential to support practitioners through developing their ability to explicate and communicate how they generate influence with others.

In exploring this critical incident with the athlete concerned (Lawrence), an incredibly powerful source of data was unearthed which would go on to challenge my assumptions, and further critique much of the literature which had come before it. In a recall interview with Lawrence, after playing the same ethnographic film whereby he had performed successfully and was subsequently praised by David, before I had an opportunity to ask a question, Lawrence immediately responded:

> Ohh, I didn't even hear David say that! It was just the ringing in my ears… I heard Omar [strength and conditioning intern] say something about afterwards, I can't remember what it was, oh you can see him grinning, or something like that but I didn't hear much of that… I was just caught up in the moment at the time…
>
> Stimulated recall interview with Lawrence (26th January, 2018)

Here, despite the best intentions of David, Lawrence was oblivious to the fact that the coaching practice had been delivered. Such data strongly reinforces the act of noticing (Jones et al., 2013; Mason, 2002), as an integral precursor for the actions of others to influence norms (beliefs stored within habitus as dispositions), and thus be able to causally influence the subsequent (inter)action of agents through norm circles.

In line with the work of Elder-Vass (2012a), it is not the norm itself but the norm circle which exerts causal influence. Therefore the storing of norms as dispositions in the habitus of individuals is predicated upon our ability to notice and observe the (inter)actions of others (Elder-Vass, 2010a). Where events go unnoticed for whatever reason, they are not capable of causally influencing (through the norm circle) normative behaviour *for that individual*. As Mason (2002, p. 29) put it, 'what we fail to notice is unlikely to have much influence upon our actions'. Although, importantly, this does not mean that the event is not real (that the event – coach behaviour – had not occurred). This event still had the potential to causally influence others if *they* noticed the event. Given that the athlete in this instance had not noticed the coaching practice, this contributes a novel finding to the orchestration literature (e.g., Readdy et al., 2016; Santos et al., 2013). Some of the pathos experienced by coaches may be as a result of the fact that, despite their best

intentions, (inter)actions with athletes may go unnoticed. Thus, they may be less likely to be able to achieve goals which have been set. This finding also extends the embryonic literature focused on athlete orchestration (Raabe et al., 2017), which suggests that athletes experience ambiguity as a result of limited information presented by coaches (i.e., feedback on performance or information on team line-ups). Another source of ambiguity presented to the athlete exists in that they may be *unaware* of coach behaviour which is directed toward (and intended to influence) them. This might create pathos for the athlete because their ability to match (or not) the expectations or goals of coaches may be restricted as a result of missing (i.e., not noticing) previous normative endorsement and enforcement acts of coaches. Indeed, this source of athlete ambiguity would not have been uncovered had the methodology focused on critical incidents from the perspective of the athlete alone.

Fleetwood's (2005) work provides an important contribution to support the explanation of this event. Specifically, Fleetwood contended that entities should be spoken of as being capable of existing independently of our identification of them; they 'can exist without someone observing, knowing and constructing' them (Fleetwood, 2005, p. 199). Indeed, Mason (2002, p. 29) noted in this regard:

> we notice many things in the course of a day, though we may mark relatively few of them and probably record virtually none until we set about this practice intentionally, and of course there are far more incidents and objects which we fail to notice at all.

Perhaps, in critical realist terms, the event and actions of the coach could therefore be said to be *realised unperceived* from Lawrence's perspective (Collier, 1994). This relates to the old adage that a tree can fall in a forest but go unnoticed if not in the direct vicinity of agents around it; the tree falling is still nonetheless a real event – it has happened. In this example, the event had occurred – the words had been verbalised by David – however, from the perspective of Lawrence, even though the event had occurred within his vicinity, it had not been perceived or noticed. Indeed, it would appear that part of the 'indeterminacy, uncertainty and unpredictability' (Tourish, 2019, p. 221) forming an inherent feature of coaches' day-to-day practices, is manifest in the fact that coaches cannot uncritically assume that athletes have received and thus interpreted practice

(i.e., behaviour) that they deliver. These findings, then, extend Elder-Vass' work by providing additional information on the mechanism which explains what the necessary precursors are for norm circles to causally influence (through dispositions) the actions of others. This information, I suggest, is explained by the act of noticing (Jones, 2019; Mason, 2002). Such noticing can be either conscious or unconscious, but where noticing is not achieved (by the individual), the specific act (enacting, endorsing or enforcing a norm on behalf of the norm circle) cannot causally influence that individual by storing the experience as a normative belief (disposition).

This distinction has important consequences and implications when we reflect back upon methodologies used in much of the extant literature on coaching practice and its influence on athlete "outcomes" (see Chapter 3). Those studies using questionnaires to assess perceptions of coaching practice and perceptions of athlete outcomes, before correlating the two measures together (e.g., Goudas, 1998; Price & Weiss, 2013) simply take for granted that athletes have received and interpreted the practices being explored in their measured constructs. Further, they ignore the temporal dimension of sessions, matches, or seasons, whereby interpretations and perceptions of the measures taken can change over the course of different time points. Crucially, what they do not permit is an exploration of whether or not the specific actions of others have been noticed and interpreted in the first place, as has been demonstrated in the present thesis. As such, the incorporation of participant observation and stimulated recall interviews presents a fruitful line for further inquiry into *how*, *when*, *why* and *under which circumstances* athletes are influenced (or not) by others (i.e., coaches).

Resonating with the view that coaches' work is often done at or near the 'edge of chaos' (Bowes & Jones, 2006), this section provides a rare examination of instances where coaching (inter)actions have been *non*influential. In contrast to romanticised portrayals of coaching, where the coach is positioned as an agent who unquestionably generates influence, greater focus on instances like the present example are important in order to more accurately and fully understand the reality of coaching that we purport to study (Jones et al., 2016). Data presented here also critically challenge the widely accepted convention that practitioners should deliver praise

immediately after successful performance has taken place for learners (i.e., athletes) to be able to make a connection between the desired behaviour and the praise (Alberto & Troutman, 1999). Indeed, implications for coaches from this evidence would suggest that there is a need to carefully consider *how* and *when* feedback may be effectively delivered to those who are in an immersive state. Perhaps, praising the athlete just after the performance had occurred and also later in the session (if no response was received from the athlete upon the first use of praise) may have helped to ensure that the coach behaviour meaningfully contributed toward (endorsing or enforcing) the norm or disposition for the specific player (Lawrence) in this case.

Overall, this data presents important philosophical, methodological and empirical considerations for researchers conducting work looking at how the (inter)actions of practitioners shape and influence others – there is strong need to identify whether stakeholders have indeed *noticed* an event in the first place before attempting to explain the influence of (inter)actions further. Recall interviews within a critical realist framework have proven to be a fruitful line of inquiry through which such considerations can be achieved. Perhaps stimulated recall also provides an added layer of noticing for participants to underpin and support their work in making an observation 'secure'. In other words, recall interviews may help to ensure that an event has been made observable and knowable to others (Corsby & Jones, 2020); those who originally missed an event (when it occurred) might be able to understand the noticing of others and consequences which this has for their subsequent action through viewing the event in recall footage.

6.5 Athlete noticing and acting 'in the role'

Building from section 6.4, which illuminated the importance of noticing for agents (e.g., athletes) to be causally influenced by social structure, this section explores critical incidents whereby athletes were then (at times) able to act in accordance with role norms. Further, this section also highlights other entities which may affect an athletes' ability to act in alignment with role norms (or not), reflecting the multiply determined nature of action.

6.5.1 *Influencing performance in line with the coach's original intentions*

In one of the indoor training sessions, Sam (the assistant coach), had designed a game in which batters were required to play against spin bowlers and avoid the fielders in order to score runs:

> Sam briefs the squad before the start of the game:
>
> *Sam*: 'Right, fellas… Obviously [the] scenario [is] spinners. So, [the] spinners are going to bowl an over [six balls] each… We're gonna bat in pairs, alright? So let's pick a batting buddy again like what we did the other week, eh…? Okay, spinners – the yellow cones are fielders [where fielders will be positioned]. Right, so mid-on [and] mid-off [fielding positions] is up at the minute… So we have got six fielders, plus the [wicket] keeper. Alright. Okay, so mid-on, mid-off is up at the minute, so we [batters] can go [hit] over the top [of them to score runs]. If we hit it into these white coned areas [targets], they are the areas [that] we are looking to score, other than where the fielders are, alright… We are gonna bat as a pair and we have got five points for that pair. Right. So if you play and miss [miss the ball when trying to hit it with the bat], you lose a point, if it [the ball] hits you on the pads [protective equipment worn over the legs of batters], you lose a point, if you are out you lose three points. [You have] them five points and you are out. Next pair in. Alright. Okay, happy? Right, okay then – give it a go – working hard, communicating. I want we [us] running. I want throwing, catching, at the stumps, backing up, just like what we've done [in practice]. Game scenario, alright.'
>
> *Field note extract (18th March, 2018)*

Indeed, in an interview with Sam after this session, he reflected on the pedagogical strategy underlying the implementation of the game and its intended purpose. In noticing (from previous sessions) that players required opportunities to develop their tactical awareness and capacity to think independently (Jones et al., 2013; Mason, 2002), Sam and his colleagues had orchestrated by planning, organising and instigating a game (with specific constraints) in an attempt to bring about improvements in individual and collective performance (Jones et al., 2013; Jones & Wallace, 2006):

> We're tending to have to do a lot for them [the players] at the moment, you kna [know], instead of them managing their own game and stuff. They've got to think for their selves, they've got to be more independent and think for themselves, you kna, I just had wrote that down, just jotted a few notes down from what I thought. And make more decisions, let's back ourselves and make more decisions, and that was the idea of them target areas and that as well – can they work it [hit the ball] into them gaps?
>
> Well obviously we had the mat down just to give it a, let it rip a little bit [a mat had been placed where the batters were required to stand to make the ball more likely to spin off the surface before the batter hit it]. So that was that and then the scoring zones were just to let them see where, where, you kna, they could get a single [a run], really

> just to manipulate the strike [get their batting partner to face the bowling to increase the team's opportunity to score runs] and it was, it is more important for the lower order [batters] to have that capability to [get the other batter on strike], you kna [know], if they are batting with a top [order] batter, you kna, so that's why we keep getting on about them [players] communicating and recognising, well look my job is to stay with him [not get out] – he has been in [batting for] a while, he is set [batting well] – I haven't got to get out, but can I get a single and still keep the, keep the scoreboard ticking over [keep scoring runs for the team]. So that was the idea of that, and I like that. I like the little scoring zones in there.
>
> Semi-structured interview with Sam (22nd March, 2018)

Sometime into the game, one of the batters – Michael – upon coming in to bat, was successful in achieving performance which aligned with what the coaches had asked to see:

> Mid-way through the game, Michael, one of the batters, plays his first ball directly into the target gap between the fielders and scores a run. The coaches instantly recognise this as good practice and endorse the performed act.
>
> *Douglas:* [To Michael] 'Well played!'
>
> *Sam:* 'What's your job then, Michael? What's your job?
>
> *Michael:* '[Looking at Roger, who is his batting partner and has been batting for a while] Get him on strike [meaning give Roger an opportunity to score from the bowlers because he has been batting for longer]'.
>
> *Douglas:* 'Good'
>
> *Sam:* 'Good lad'
>
> *Field note extract (18th March, 2018)*

In monitoring and responding to the evolving circumstances of the training game, Sam and Douglas had noticed role performance which was successful in relation to the norms that they had verbalised and made noticeable to the athletes (establishing the rules, constraints and expectations of the game) before it had started. In providing 'structure' to team performance and explicating what coaches wanted to see, beforehand, these descriptors provided an endorsement or enforcement of specific norms which were then used to interpret and make sense of unfolding events (Corsby & Jones, 2020). Through noticing performance which then aligned to these pre-stated role norms, coaches acted to further endorse and enforce the practice which they had just observed. In other words, they verbalised or made 'noticeable' their thoughts, in an attempt to make adherence to the norm more likely. Here,

Sam alluded to the intentions behind his practice in questioning and praising Michael for his actions:

> Just let him [Michael] know what his role is. His role. He knows it like. He knows he is not a top four batter who is going to go in and whack it [the ball]. But he is one of them, the longer he bats he will – he will make a 50 [runs] or something, you know… Just probably next year, not this year I think – I hope I'm wrong – because he is one of the better bats [batters] of the lower order, and he is a left-hander… And again, just letting him know his role, but giving him a little bit of praise, letting him be aware of it. And to be fair he responds to that. He never plays a rash shot or nowt [anything]. He does try and do what you have asked him. He knows what his role is in the team – these are bright kids these lads you know.
>
> Semi-structured interview with Sam (22nd March, 2018)

Sam appeared to be satisfied with the ongoing performance of Michael. Indeed, he stated that his intention in endorsing and enforcing the norm in this way served a dual purpose:

> Well I'm just trying to show that I've got a little bit of time for him, you know what I mean – to integrate him a little bit more with the squad and stuff. And to know his role. We don't see him as somebody that is going to come in and smack it [the ball]. But, we do need nurdlers [those who can score singles into the gaps between fielders] and stuff in the middle order, you know… So that's a role, and if he can do it well then, you know, he has got a shout [of getting a place in the team] hasn't he?
>
> Semi-structured interview with Sam (22nd March, 2018)

Through monitoring his responses in relation to the stated objectives and role norms, Sam hinted that his behaviour (questioning and praise) here was part of a broader micro-political act to demonstrate care and show Michael that he had 'time for him' in an attempt to integrate him more within the team (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a).

In asking a question of Michael, Sam had also alluded to, and attempted to endorse an even more local role norm which was specific to Michael as an individual (and perhaps other lower order batters) here, given that he had just come in to bat and there was another batter still at the crease who had been batting for a long period. Sam had orchestrated by shaping, endorsing and enforcing role norms specific to Michael which, if enacted, he felt had the potential to meet both individual and collective goals for the organisation (Jones & Wallace, 2005). Sam's intended focus of his behaviour here (and the design of the conditioned game), then, was to ensure that players understood their roles within the squad under specific circumstances:

> I just said look, you kna, you have to recognise who is the main batter, what is your role, you kna and just have a word. Your job is to get him on strike, that is, you kna, but they should know that now, because we're actually telling them quite a bit, you kna, they're having, they have – you should know your role in the team. You kna, if you're coming in number ten [batting as number ten in the order] and you're batting with number five, [batters should be thinking] I haven't got to get out, he [the other batter] is in, he might get we [us] another 40 or 50 runs, you kna. And the longer you stay in, the easier it is for you as well, you kna, so erm, I think they err, they have to learn.
>
> Stimulated recall interview with Sam (22nd March, 2018)

In these circumstances, the role norm was for Michael to try and score runs to get Roger (the other batter) on strike (facing the bowlers more frequently) so that Roger could score a greater amount of runs for the side. In using a divergent question, Sam had sought to clarify whether or not Michael sufficiently understood his role norm in this instance. Here, Sam's practice in questioning appeared to be effective in terms of its intended influence – to allow Michael to think and learn, in this case about his role in the game (Harvey & Light, 2015):

> Instead of him [Sam] just saying your role is this, you know, this. It is him asking a question, saying, right, I know what your role is, but do you – tell me what your role is and just get me refocused. So it is definitely a lot better than just saying your role is this because I don't really focus on that a lot. If someone says to me do this, do that, I'm a bit like yeah, yeah sure. But if they say what are you going to do, what are you going to do better? It's definitely a lot more beneficial… He [Sam] does it all the time, as well in the past – previous times he has been asking questions, he says like good lad, good this. He just wants us to think that we know what we want to do in a match and we know where to do it, when to do it, and how to do it – it's just what his aims are… [my role is] to get the other person [batter] on strike.
>
> Stimulated recall interview with Michael (10th April, 2018)

When Michael responded in a manner which conformed to the prescribed role norms as put forward by the coaches, this was quickly praised by both Douglas and Sam. Here, a possible mechanism explaining the influence of Sam and Douglas' (inter)actions with Michael was that they (alongside previous interactions with others) had served to strengthen the norm stored as a disposition within the synaptic and neural networks of Michael (Elder-Vass, 2007b). Indeed, given that Michael appeared to be clearly aware of the role norm in this specific situation, this would imply that the influence of the norm circle (through dispositions) *and* his conscious deliberation (awareness of the norm) together causally influenced the way that he acted in hitting the ball into a gap and scoring one run to get Roger on strike:

> Well, all the coaches know what my role is really when I face spin – it is to get the other person [batter] on strike, and rotate it around. Because if it is a left-hand [and] right-hand [batter batting together] especially, rotating the strike is really frustrating for the bowler, so that's why I know what my role is
>
> Stimulated recall interview with Michael (10th April, 2018)

As Michael was able to instantly conform to the role norm in his very first ball after coming in to bat, this would imply that his noticing of previous historical (inter)actions with members of the squad (i.e., others, or indeed himself performing the role in a similar manner and/or being praised or endorsed for it, or being punished for failing to do it) was sufficient to mean that the norm circle (through interactions between Michael and others) had stored the norm as a disposition and causally influenced his action (Elder-Vass, 2012a). Importantly, this learning was not achieved solely by unconscious social conditioning; it was also conscious reading of (interpreting), or reflection on previous interactions which had likely allowed Michael to store the norm as a disposition. In other words:

> Our habitus at any one time is not the unmediated product of social structures, but the result of a lifetime of critical reflection upon our experiences, including our experiences of those structures. Thus, the human individual remains the prime mover of human action, even if we accept that social conditioning plays a crucial part in forming our dispositions (Elder-Vass, 2007b, p. 344).

As such, this finding compliments and responds to a small body of work in coaching which has called for greater examination of everyday mundane acts, and, specifically, how agents are able to read and act in line with normative expectations (Jones, Potrac, Cushion, & Ronglan, 2011; Jones et al., 2013; Thompson et al., 2015). Or, as Garfinkel (1967, p. 37) put it, the 'seen but unnoticed backgrounds of everyday activities'. What the present research adds, through Jones and Wallace's (2005, 2006) and Elder-Vass' (2010a) theorising, is an understanding of the means through which coaches orchestrate to endorse normative standards and the mechanism (i.e., norm circles) through which such conformity or non-conformity can be explained. Indeed, Michael did not question what was meant by 'rotating the strike' because he was able to sufficiently read (and then enact) what this meant as a

result of his previous (inter)actions and normative dispositions. Michael's *conscious decision* to play in this manner also contributed to his action. In deliberating on his role as a batter under the specific circumstances, his thought process before performance was centred on aiming to align with the stated norms (i.e., to get his batting partner, who was the more experienced batter, into a position where he could score more runs):

> [I was] constantly thinking what's my role, I need to get off strike. Rotate every ball. And I know that is one of his [Sam's] tactics as well… when he is saying what is your job… it's just trying to reinforce in my mind, stay focused, stay switched on, what is your role? Who are you going to get on strike? Which fielders are you going to beat? And, it did make me feel a lot more focused, as well with it.
>
> Stimulated recall interview with Michael (10th April, 2018)

Agents within organisations act differently when they are 'in the role' (i.e., acting on behalf of the organisation) compared to their more general behaviour (i.e., when they are not 'in the role'; Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). As has been exemplified here, such action is often related to agents' understandings of how others would expect them to act, which is established through their own noticing of (inter)actions and requires micro-political literacy (Potrac, Mallett, et al., 2017).

> 'When a role incumbent does act in the role, she [sic] adopts behaviours that have been specified by the organisation, as a result of acquiring a normative belief or disposition: the belief that role incumbents ought to act as specified by the norms that make up their role' (Elder-Vass, 2010a, p. 158).

We can say that in performing the way that Michael did, 'the higher level entity, in this case the organisation' acted '*through* the individual'; those properties that Michael had acquired by occupying his role were 'essentially properties of the organisation localised in the individual' (Elder-Vass, 2010a, p. 158). Building from the work of Raabe et al. (2017), this study presents novel perspectives on *how* athletes adopt strategies to orchestrate pathos. Here, in navigating potential ambiguity between the goals of the coaches and his own goals for successful role performance, Michael orchestrated by noticing (and responding to) the actions of other athletes and endorsement or enforcement from coaches of (previous)

performance. In doing so, it could be said that he had developed a disposition as a result of these previous interactions and conscious decisions, which enabled him to manage some of the pathos that could have been created as a result of coaches having a different goal to the actual performance which he then enacted.

When I asked Sam if he felt that his interaction had influenced the way in which Michael had actually performed, he commented:

> Yes, I definitely think it does, because he knows that I don't want him coming down the wicket and smashing it for four and six [playing more attackingly]. I think I said to him later on, but mind if it is there to hit [the bowler bowls a bad ball], let's not be frightened to hit over the top [of the fielders] if they are both in [fielding close] and stuff. Just I'm conscious of who I'm wanting to try and err, who I recognise and who needs a little bit of encouragement and an arm round their shoulder sort of thing, and I think he is one of them. Cos he, you know he is not quite there [a high performing player]… same in the under 15's, he wasn't always a regular choice… He has done really well to be in [the squad] a year young really when he wasn't even like a first choice at 15's… but David just had a little punt [gamble] on him [in selection]. He [David] is still not convinced about him though, having said that. I think he has grown on me more than anyone else, because he has got – he's another one who has got a bit of a game plan…
>
> Semi-structured interview with Sam (22nd March, 2018)

Recognising successful role performance, Sam had also laid out an additional expectation to Michael here that should the bowler bowl a bad ball (i.e., a ball which is easier for the batter to score runs from), his role permitted him to play more attackingly, despite being the new batter. Thus, Sam asked Michael to appreciate the indexical and delicate nature of norms and their applicability (Elder-Vass, 2010a). He expected Michael to sufficiently understand which role norm applied under which circumstances to achieve desirable performance (Elder-Vass, 2012a).

6.5.2 *Performance of athletes as contingent and 'multiply determined'*

Despite being consciously aware of the norm and being unconsciously influenced by dispositions (stored through interactions with the norm circle), this did not mean that the norm could be unproblematically enacted on every occasion that the athlete attempted to do so. Indeed,

there were occasions where Michael was unable to enact performance which aligned with the norm (to get his batting partner on strike):

> A short time after in the same session, Michael misses the ball bowled by the bowler [Sunil]. It hits him on the pads [batting protective equipment worn over the batters' legs] and he is unable to score a run to get his batting partner on strike. Sam, praises the bowler for preventing Michael from being able to score from his bowling:
>
> *Sam:* [to Sunil] 'Yesss, well bowled'.
>
> *Field note extract (18th March, 2018)*

This field note excerpt highlights that even when an incumbent of a role is acting 'in the role' (on behalf of the organisation), their actions are not fully determined by the organisation or (bundles of) norms which help to specify the successful enactment of the role. Indeed, causal powers of the individual (i.e., reflexivity) and other factors co-determine action (Archer, 1995). 'Although the organisation has a causal effect on the role incumbent, this effect, like any causal influence, does not fully determine a necessary outcome' (Elder-Vass, 2010a, p. 159). For instance, the agency retained by the athlete could have meant that Michael selected to rebel against the role norm by deliberately blocking the ball, as opposed to trying to get his batting partner on strike. This explanation appeared unlikely, however, given that the athlete had previously stated a clear intention to act in alignment with the role norm set out (please see section 6.5.1).

Within sport, one of the components which co-determines how we are able to act (perform) is often the non-stable and unpredictable performance of the opponent(s), and how we respond to, relate to, or counter such performance (Araujo, Davids, & Hristovski, 2006). This adds to the inherent ambiguity of performance and the inability of the coach to fully control the actions of their athletes (Jones & Ronglan, 2018; Readdy et al., 2016), or indeed the ability of the athlete to control the achievement of their own goals. Here, among other things, the performance of the bowler and the conditions of the playing surface (generating more spin on the ball) played a role in determining how the batter was able to perform in respect of the role norms which had been endorsed. Even where the batter appeared to be causally influenced by both the stored disposition and his conscious reflexivity, he was

unable to perform according to the specified role norm on this ball. In keeping with an emergentist perspective, performance was therefore *multiply determined* (Bhaskar, 1975; Elder-Vass, 2010a). Not only does this contribute to pathos for coaches (Readdy et al., 2016), it also contributes to pathos for athletes. This study therefore provides fresh understanding to the work of Raabe et al. (2017). In line with the present findings, I suggest that, even where athletes have the intention to act in line with goals of the coaches (and their own goals), an additional source of pathos exists in that their ability to then enact this performance is often dependent upon the performance of opponents alongside a range of specific contextual conditions (e.g., weather, playing surface, officials' decisions).

In recognising some of this structural vulnerability as part of his role, and the fact that, despite his best intentions, it was not always possible to execute the role norm because of the performance of opponents (in this case his teammate within a training session), Michael suggested that the praise delivered to Sunhil (the bowler) in this instance actually motivated him to attempt to adhere to the role norm even more strongly:

> It [Sam's practice] was just planting confidence in his [Sunhil's] mind. So, I know he wasn't bowling very well, so stuff like that where he does bowl a good ball, [Sam was trying to] make him get confident, build his confidence level up, bowl better. Just bowl like that again. And it is useful especially when you are not doing very well. Although sometimes David doesn't say anything when you're not doing very well either, just paying a little compliment, saying yeah you're doing this well, you're doing that well – well bowled. It does raise the energy level, raise the confidence level up… It [Sam praising Sunhil] made me think that he is going to try and bowl exactly the same… and he is going to try and focus on his line [the line that he is going to bowl the ball down] a little bit more, so I've just got to nit and grit hard, and get off strike. It does help when other people get paid compliments and it is against me. It does help me to focus and think right, I'm better than this. I'm better than him. I can do it.
>
> Stimulated recall interview with Michael (10th April, 2018)

This point raises an important implication for coaches – it is not just the athlete who is the intended recipient of coach behaviour that may be influenced by coaching practice; other athletes who notice the practice may also be influenced in some (potentially unintended or unanticipated) way. As such, becoming more aware of how practice may influence multiple athletes (in potentially different ways) is important. In this instance, the praise delivered by

Sam was intended to encourage and challenge Sunhil in his performance, as well as settle his nerves:

> [I] praise him [Sunhil] lots. I think he is one of them, he needs lots and lots. He comes back, he's always got some thoughts, I'm asking him – I love working with him… you've just got to constantly encourage him. And push him a little bit. Challenge him a little bit… I think we have a good relationship me and him… most of the time I am his spin bowling coach… he knows that I really rate him… the pleasing thing from a coaching point of view, he takes it on board all the time, so he strives, he sets his standards and he is there or there abouts every week… he didn't bowl very well early on, but none of them [spinners] did – the first three or four overs weren't very good, but I think he was a bit nervous coming into the group when he's two years [younger than the other players]… but when he settles in and that, he's good – he responds to it as well
>
> Stimulated recall interview with Sam (22nd March, 2018)

Instead though, unexpectedly for Sam, other athletes (i.e., Michael) who noticed his practice were influenced by the same coach behaviour in a heterogeneous manner. In other words, coach behaviour (e.g., praise) generated unintended consequences (Denison, 2007; Jones et al., 2013). Praise for conformity to one role norm, then, can simultaneously and indirectly endorse (e.g., punish the non-enactment of) a different role norm by another member of the organisation. In addition to the findings of Readdy et al. (2016) who reported sources of ambiguity and pathos for coaches, this study adds new understanding. Specifically, ambiguity is present for coaches in so far as their behaviour might have a different influence (on different agents) to that originally intended. Here, although the behaviour was directed towards Sunhil, Michael was also influenced (arguably positively) by what had been said. The role norm (i.e., to get his batting partner on strike) had been further strengthened by Sam's praise toward Sunhil. In some cases, the unintended influences of coaching practice could result in greater pathos/ambiguity, however (Jones & Wallace, 2005); where coach behaviour has an unintended influence, this could serve to detract from the coach's ability to attain goals which they have set out to achieve. Coaches could therefore look to carefully consider who else may be able to hear/see (and thus be influenced by) their behaviour when it is directed toward another athlete, and how this wider influence might be positive or negative in terms of working toward stated objectives.

6.6 The use of humour to endorse and enforce norms

After introducing more conventional methods of endorsing and enforcing norms (i.e., instruction and praise) in section 6.5, the purpose of this section is to highlight how a broader range of behaviours were utilised by coaches in their attempts to influence athletes. Indeed, norms were not solely endorsed or enforced through the use of praise linked to acts which conformed to the norm, or punishment related to acts which deviated from the norm. Among the practices adopted by coaches, humour appeared to be a frequently utilised strategy. Indeed, a fielding activity within one of the indoor training sessions provided a meaningful representation of this:

> Players are in the middle of an intense fielding activity. Two sets of stumps are positioned at either end of the indoor hall and there are four teams – one team stationed in each corner. The ball is rolled out vigorously by David to one of the four queues who must pick the ball up and throw at one of the sets of stumps. The job of the other queues is to stop the ball if it does not hit the stumps and then hit both sets of stumps again with fast overarm throws and catches, before finishing with a throw back into the coach. It was assumed by David that players would naturally select overarm throws and this was not explicated directly before the activity commenced.
>
> The activity is moving in a slick fashion, with purpose. The red wind ball is zipping around the hall which mirrors the energy levels of the players. David appears to like what he is seeing and praises each player, individually, for the role that they have played in one of the run-throughs:
>
> *David:* "Well done. Well done. Well done. Well done. Excellent."
>
> Again, the ball is moving slickly between the groups with powerful overarm throws. Out of the blue, Norman, upon retrieving the ball, softly throws it back to David underarm. This sticks out like a sore thumb against the backdrop of throws and levels of intensity which have come before it. Almost before the throw has even left the hand of Norman, David intervenes:
>
> *David:* "Looovely underarm throw, Norman, ha ha ha ha ha ha ha. Yes, Omar [David sarcastically repeats Norman's throw by very gently exchanging the ball with the squad's strength and conditioning intern, Omar] ha ha"
>
> I glance at other players who by now have big smirks on their faces.
>
> The ball begins to fizz around the room once more. Again it falls at the hands of Norman who is the last person to receive the ball. This time Norman throws the ball powerfully overarm into the catching mitt worn by David, hitting the mitt with a reverberating thud which is greeted with an instantaneous show of gratitude:
>
> *David:* "That's better, Norman. Good lad!"
>
> *Field note extract (04 February 2018)*

Here, we again see David's attempt to orchestrate in terms of managing the ambiguity of his environment. In recognising some of the structural vulnerability in his role (Kelchtermans, 2009) (the fact that he was not able to fully control the actions of his players – in this case that performance had fallen below the expected standards – to throw the ball with intensity and power), David micro-politically acted (intervened with humour) to endorse and enforce the norm for high levels of intensity and performance (e.g., strong powerful throws). Specifically, he noticed actions which did not conform to the norm and used humour and sarcasm in order to attempt to influence the actions of others (i.e., Norman) and internalise or strengthen a tendency to conform to this norm (Elder-Vass, 2012a). In doing so, through the use of humour, he had made his noticing socially structured (i.e., understandable and accountable to others; Corsby & Jones, 2020). Reflecting on his intentions in using this practice, David commented:

> I don't know what goes through his [Norman's] head – I don't know whether he thinks he can hurt me if he throws the ball at me from 20 yards away… it's kind of a humorous nice way to say don't do that ever again please. You know, we ain't under 11's… we're in the middle of an intense drill, so what you'd think he would do to keep that up is to show me that he can wing [throw] it at me from 20 yards away… … Instead of me just saying don't do that ever again, or saying c'mon, you know like in a way that might upset him… Hopefully he thought well aye he's right like – what am I doing? And really what'll happen is, it'll make sure that none of the others do that… It's just like how does he think that that meets or is of similar standard, whatever, pace, intensity, to the drill that we are doing?
>
> Stimulated recall interview with David (14th February, 2018)

Interestingly, when I asked David if he would have used humour if this event had occurred for other players in the squad, he responded:

> No, no… err if it was a better player – if it was Roger who had done that – I would be like, what are you doing? Throw it in man. You know, or something like that… You know, Norman, he doesn't say anything to you, he turns up and he, you know, you wouldn't know if he'd had 10 wickets in an innings or none [no wickets] for a hundred [runs]… I think with Norman it's like a bit of a running joke. I mean really one of the first times I came across Norman was when we went to Oundle like two and a half years ago, and he had been in and out the team, under 14 tour. It was the first day and we played Cumbria, and we bossed the game for five hours and we blew up, and they ended up winning by two wickets… … and it started – his fielding started – it's not a joke in terms of like how we take the piss out of him, but, you know his fielding has improved… and really the thing that stands out for me was he was at mid-off [fielding position] and the ball got hit to XXXX XXXXXXX [another player from a previous squad], a right-hander hit the ball to XXXX XXXXXXX at mid-wicket [fielding position] and XXXX ran round to his right and there was enough time for him to take a bit of time and throw the stumps down at the umpires end. So, Norman was backing

> up at mid-off, so XXXX has obviously fucking wanged this ball [thrown it hard], quite a bit of pace on it and Norman has gone to stop it by sort of like hands out the way, like kicking it, kicking it and its just gone straight through him for four [runs to the batters]… So then at the time there was a period of silence between me and Timmy [another coach in a previous squad] for like three or four seconds and then I said something along the lines of did that actually just happen… Then he's had to go and run after the ball. XXXX has obviously then gone off it…the team lose the game, we end up finishing third in the whole thing, so losing that hours cricket affected us qualifying for the final on the last day… so it started on that, and I think one of the lads had called him XXXX XXX [nickname], so we call him XXXX XXX, which like – you know he's just like not the sort of lad that you think would ever have a nickname, you just call him Norman and that would be it… I think he quite enjoys it, if I knew he was upset by it then I, you know. When he started picking the ball up with his hands and throwing it in it was like, you know well done for not using your feet Norman, you know…. So that was one of the first times I had ever seen him field, so for him to pick the ball up with his hands is a progression… But, yeah that's just, you know, it's not a running joke but it's like, you know he could be quite good but he has just got no, you know, like you could blow him over… He should know that that is not good enough by now.
>
> Stimulated recall interview with David (14th February, 2018)

This passage supports previous theorisations of humour and its role in providing a balancing act between 'seriousness and fun' (Ronglan & Aggerholm, 2014). Importantly, 'coaches' sensitivity regarding how their behaviours appear in the eyes of others is decisive in the creation of productive face-to-face interactions' (Ronglan & Aggerholm, 2014, p. 42). David had noticed an opportunity to act in a way which reinforced the norms and expectations of the group whilst concurrently aiming to maintain a positive working relationship with Norman. In referring to the historical background of the situation and experiencing previous reactions from Norman to humour, he had come to the conclusion that it would be safe to use humour in this way. Had humour not have been understood in this cultural milieu, the interaction could have led to a rupturing of social bonds between David and the players (Edwards & Jones, 2018). In this regard, David appeared to be aware that through behaving in another way (i.e., more directly instructing the player to not perform like this again) he may have upset Norman. Whilst accounts of humour in the coaching literature have valuably highlighted its function and entanglement within power relations (Edwards & Jones, 2018; Ronglan & Aggerholm, 2014), what the present section adds is a suggested explanation of how in (inter)acting with others, humour may simultaneously serve to endorse or enforce the norms of a cultural context and thus be likely to play a role in shaping the subsequent behaviour of agents.

There is a need here to recognise that norms are not always enforced through homogeneous (inter)actions between all agents, in all circumstances. The same norm can be endorsed or enforced using different behaviours and actions (e.g., humour, praise, criticism), depending upon how these (inter)actions are read, framed and interpreted by others. Importantly, however, the norm to throw with intensity was dependent upon its relation to other *indexing norms*: norms that help to provide sufficient information to structure understanding (e.g., in order to understand the role norms of a fielder, this first requires an understanding of whom and what constitutes a fielder – when are cricketers within this role) (Elder-Vass, 2012a). When Norman later went on to throw the ball powerfully overarm into David's catching mitt, Elder-Vass (2010a) would suggest here that the norm (circle) had been causally influential through the (inter)actions of others, storing (or strengthening) a belief about expected performance within Norman's habitus; his behaviour was causally influenced by the norm circle. Upon receiving the ball both this disposition and his conscious capacity to think and act had shaped his decision to throw the ball at David with more purpose and power up until the point at which he had released the ball (Elder-Vass, 2007b). Norman's actions were then subsequently endorsed by David who had praised his adherence to the norm in throwing the ball more powerfully. This would have likely further strengthened the disposition for Norman at a neuronal level, perhaps evidenced by the fact that he was not observed throwing gently underarm in these circumstances for the remainder of the training programme. Norman could be said to have noticed the norm through his (inter)actions with others, before micro-politically acting so as to demonstrate to the coaches that he aligned to the norm for intensity and high performance in attempt to further his own interests and establish his place in the team (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a).

This section again provides empirical support that it is the norm circle and not necessarily rules or verbalisations of others, alone, which play a role in causally influencing the actions of agents (Elder-Vass, 2012a). Through the (inter)actions of the squad, both current and historical, the *belief* that it was the norm to throw the ball hard and with intensity had come to be constructed within this culture (and stored as a disposition), which causally influenced the actions of others.

Without the coach explicitly mentioning that the norm was to throw powerfully, and by simply saying 'Looovely underarm throw, Norman, ha ha ha ha ha ha ha', alongside a sarcastic demonstration, it would appear that Norman was sufficiently able to notice the meaning and intention of these actions and thus be causally influenced by (inter)actions of those around him (who acted on behalf of the norm circle) by storing or strengthening the belief about how to perform. It is possible that, in the first instance where Norman threw the ball underarm, he failed to recognise the circumstances under which the norm applied, or that his discipline in enacting an already understood norm had slipped (Elder-Vass, 2010a). For example, given that events and actions are multiply determined (Elder-Vass, 2012a), while Norman may have been (consciously and/or unconsciously) aware of the norm, it is plausible to suggest that he had momentarily lapsed concentration and thus failed to enact the role norm of throwing overarm with high intensity. David's actions had subsequently served to increase the strength and applicability of the norm for Norman. This was demonstrated in Norman's actions then mirroring the norm the next time he was required to throw the ball. Of course, Norman had the agential capacity to throw the ball underarm again, however he did not. His actions could be said to be causally influenced by the proximal norm circle (i.e., those taking part in the session), as well as the imagined norm circle (i.e., through having a belief that more agents than just those in his immediate presence would be committed to enforcing, endorsing and enacting such a norm) (Elder-Vass, 2010a).

When reviewing this segment of the session with players in a recall interview, Dylan and Roger individually commented:

> I thought it was quite funny. I thought it was a bit strange that he did underarm throw it. And then he [David] did the demonstration with Omar as a reminder of what the, what the throw was supposed to be like… It wasn't harsh, he was just saying err… he wouldn't have took it as lightly, Norman, like next time he'll make sure that he does it, but he won't feel like, he won't be pressured to do it or anything…
>
> Stimulated recall interview with Dylan (15th February, 2018)

> I was laughing, yeah, it's nice cos erm, like maybe another coach would have shouted or something like that. Err, I think it is good to have maybe once or twice in a session someone, if someone messes up, or does something like that err, just take the mick out of them, and just err, so everyone has a laugh, everyone is feeling calm… he singled him out but not in a way that would embarrass him, erm, so yeah it was good… It just made everyone step back and have a laugh.

Stimulated recall interview with Roger (15th February, 2018)

Other athletes, here, implicitly suggested that in noticing the behaviour of Norman and his (inter)actions with David, they too had recognised that the actions of the former in throwing the ball underarm did not conform to the norm for this environment. In noticing and interpreting the coach's orchestrated actions, both Roger and Dylan suggested that David's response was conducted in a manner which was not 'harsh' and would not have embarrassed Norman. This interpretation resonates with the work of Ronglan and Aggerholm (2014), who suggested that humour can be used as a mechanism for athletes to better cope with the strain of rigorous training programmes, by closing the perceived distance between the coach and athlete. Interestingly, Roger commented on how David using humour in this instance contributed toward not only the norm, but the degree to which the norm was likely to be endorsed or enforced in the event that future 'mistakes' were to occur:

> I think, even though it was light-hearted, like, erm, [David] probably [means] don't, specifically, don't throw it underarm again, like it was obviously a drill to throw it overarm, erm and what he did was a bit stupid… … I think if he [David] did shout everyone would be like, a bit like on edge, so kind of like thinking oh if we make that mistake he might shout again. Erm, whereas if he laughs, like we know it's alright to make mistakes as long as we don't keep doing it, erm, yeah.
>
> Stimulated recall interview with Roger (15th February, 2018)

This excerpt highlights that the *way* in which the norm is endorsed or enforced (e.g., such as using humour in the present example) also sets an expectation in athletes for the severity of punishment that is likely to occur should the norm not be adhered to in the future. Different behaviours used by coaches to endorse or enforce norms can thus have implications for athletes' readings of the extent, strength and applicability of the norm (circle). Athletes may be able to use their noticing and reading of such interactions with coaches (or others) as a basis to orchestrate by managing potential ambiguity which could otherwise exist as a result of lacking sufficient practical consciousness of the extent, diversity and applicability of (different) norm circles.

Acting on behalf of the organisation and the norm circle, using humour in this way, David had not simply negatively regulated or constrained the actions of agents within his squad. Indeed, it

can be argued that the operationalisation of causal power through a norm circle in this way had the potential to create new powers or resources; what Searle (1995) might refer to as a *deontology*. A deontology is where a regulative institution (i.e., a norm circle) creates a new social capability (i.e., the possibility to more effectively perform an act; Elder-Vass, 2012a). For instance, through the causal power of the norm circle influencing athletes to throw in more powerful ways, with intensity, this had the potential to increase the likelihood that fielders would be able to reduce the amount of runs scored by the batters, or even run the batter out by hitting the stumps more quickly. Searle (1995) would argue that it is *constitutive rules* which create a power or deontology to do something which would not otherwise be possible (e.g., in establishing the rules of playing chess, this creates the very possibility of playing chess, or in this example the 'rule' created to throw powerfully creates the possibility of running a batter out). However, Elder-Vass argues that it is not just constitutive rules which create new powers; indeed he renames constitutive rules as *indexing norms* for this reason (Elder-Vass, 2012a). He suggests that 'complex institutional reality always depends on an articulated norm set, which includes both at least one indexing norm and at least one regulative norm' (Elder-Vass, 2012a, p. 73). In this sense he points to the example that: '[u]nless we have an indexing norm to define who is to count as a goalkeeper, for example, then any regulative norms concerning the standards of behaviour required of goalkeepers are not only unenforceable but meaningless' and '[t]here is no meaning to the concept of *goalkeeper* and thus no point in having an indexing norm defining goalkeepers unless there are norms that regulate the behaviour of goalkeepers' (Elder-Vass, 2012a, p. 72). Thus, in proximally endorsing the norm to throw powerfully and with intensity, it can be said that the coach had contributed to the creation of a deontology for the players – a potential for them to be more likely to run batters out, or prevent the opposition team from scoring runs. David had used normative endorsement to orchestrate and manage pathos: he attempted to reduce the likelihood of athletes using less powerful, underarm throws by making them aware that they faced a systematic incentive to throw powerfully with intensity. This was only possible as a result of the presence of indexing norms to define what a fielder is and what the laws of cricket imply that a fielder is required to do to run a batter out or save runs. Building upon these regulative norms by identifying that the norm was also to throw

powerfully in order to run batters out, the (inter)actions of agents in the present context had contributed toward the articulated norm set in an attempt to increase the organisation's operational efficiency.

6.7 The heterogeneous influence of coaching practice: Athletes as 'sites of normative intersectionality'

The purpose of this section is to build upon the complexity developed in sections 6.4 – 6.6, which have highlighted examples of *how*, *when*, *why*, and *under which circumstances* coaching practice had (or had not) influenced the subsequent (inter)actions of athletes. In this final section, even more complexity is added to the explanation of this phenomenon. Indeed, I explore social events whereby athletes were required to negotiate complex assemblages of norms and how this emergently played out in-situ. I now examine some pertinent orchestrated actions of coaches (and other stakeholders) and consider how athletes interpreted, experienced and engaged with such practice in light of being presented with intersectional norms.

6.7.1 *Deciding between conflicting norms*

During one of the two-day matches, the coaches discussed the ongoing performance of the team and what they considered to be a suitable plan for effective performance moving forward:

> Batting first, Nettleton are beginning to build a commanding position in this two-day match. As I walk around the boundary with the assistant coach (Sam) and the team manager (Douglas), however, they both air their concerns that Nettleton may not be scoring quickly enough in a spell before the tea break. The head coach (David) is away, so Sam has taken the lead.
>
> *Douglas:* 'We're taking overs out of the game at the moment [not scoring at a quick enough rate] – that's all we're doing'.
>
> *Sam:* 'They've [the opposition] actually bowled alright haven't they…? We've letten [let] them bowl at us a little bit [common jargon in cricket meaning that a team are not proactively seeking to counter-attack the bowlers, and are instead batting more conservatively, allowing the bowlers to build up pressure]… I've said [to the players] let's try and be 150 or 160 [runs] at tea… nobody has used their feet to them [attacked the spin bowlers]… all it takes is somebody to come down and hit them [bowlers] over the top [of the fielders] a couple of times, get mid-on (and) mid-off [fielding positions] back and then there is a massive gap there isn't there?'.
>
> Just as we are speaking, one of the batters, Jamie, plays another defensive shot and blocks the ball bowled by the spin bowler.

Sam: [Clearly frustrated] 'See, there - that's the one there, Adam – for [us] to get away [play more attackingly against]. And this is where we fall down, Douglas, isn't it…? We've let them bowl at we [us], you see!'

The umpires purposefully balance the bails on top of the stumps and call "tea, gents". The mood among players appears to be high and Nettleton are currently 148 runs for the loss of only two wickets after 46 overs. Players assemble in the changing room, when, before heading for tea, Sam, the assistant coach, addresses the squad – in particular the current batters (Jamie and Roger) who have just come off and will bat again after the tea interval.

Sam: 'We're maybe 12 runs short of what we would have liked to have been… but we've got wickets in hand, I just think we've got to show a little bit more intent, we've got to double that [score] and a bit more in the next 40 overs… we've got to look for some gaps – get a few fielders pushed back, mid-on, mid-off back so it opens the field up a little bit'.

Jamie: 'would you say to go over the top [hit over the opposition]'?

Sam: 'Well, I think when mid-on and mid-off [fielding positions] is in it's, especially off the spinners – off-spinner bowling from this end, nobody [has] tried to hit him over the top, you know what I mean – just to push mid-on back and stuff.'

Field note extract (17 July 2018 – During the tea interval of the batting innings)

Sam, here, had asked the athletes to push the fielders back by hitting the ball over the top of them, forcing a change to the field settings and opening up gaps to score more runs.

Towards the end of the tea interval, David, the head coach, arrives back from a period in the game where he had to leave for a family commitment. He reads the score line and is briefed by Sam on the messages that he has delivered to the players.

Sam: 'All we've spoken about, David, is just batting obviously another 40 overs and [trying to get] four [runs] an over, and if we look at [scoring] four [runs] an over and try and get 320 [runs] or something and bat the day, we are going to bat the day really aren't we?'

To the players, David advocates a somewhat conflicting message to that delivered by Sam earlier in the tea break.

David: [addressing the squad] 'We're talking 40 overs – that's… going to take us close to 300 [runs] isn't it – so I wouldn't worry too much about scoring – you'll score naturally enough. Feel alright [directed at Roger]? Alright [directed at Jamie]? Start again.'

Field note extract (17 July 2018 – Later during the same tea interval)

These findings critically challenge conventional coaching theory (e.g., motivational and leadership theory) which portrays coaches as agents who are unproblematically capable of *acting alone* to bring order to complexity (e.g., Baker et al., 2000; Chelladurai et al., 1988; Reinboth & Duda, 2006; Weiss et al., 2009). As opposed to coaches being agents who stand apart from complexity, I

assert that coaches (in and through interaction) often enact claims to leader agency to *work with* ambiguity, and, in doing so, may dialectically *generate* further complexity. Indeed, the data presented above are indicative of leaders' experiences and management of the limited prediction and control that they have in their working context (Bowes & Jones, 2006). Their responsive (inter)actions with players can, therefore, usefully be interpreted as orchestration (Jones & Wallace, 2005). Specifically, the coaches' practice responded to ambiguity and pathos evident in the fact that the actions of their players (e.g., how they played) were not fully under their control, and that there was a potential misalignment between the performance targets they initially held and the players' ability to actually achieve them in the realities of the match (e.g., because players were not playing attackingly enough) (Jones et al., 2013). Leaders, then, were required to deal with ever present possibilities and contingencies, indeterminacy and uncertainty as opposed to linear sequences (Tourish, 2019).

Amid this uncertainty, Sam monitored and responded to the evolving context by *noticing* a chance to act (Jones, 2019; Mason, 2002): in discussions with Douglas, he spotted an opportunity to play over the top of the fielders, before planning and instigating an attempt to manage some of the ambiguity by influencing the batters' principles of play during the tea interval (Jones & Ronglan, 2018). David also (inter)acted amid the ambiguity of not having been able to monitor how the team had batted (and the opposition bowled and fielded), after speaking to Sam. Thus, Sam and David's actions in noticing did not simply relate to their visual perception of events. Their noticing was instead a 'locally organised achievement', which was constructed with, and made 'knowable' or 'observable' to others, through inter-action in team talks (Corsby & Jones, 2020).

Drawing upon their specialised roles (i.e., assistant coach and head coach) and authority relations that accompanied these (see section 6.2), acting on behalf of the organisation, Sam and David sought to endorse or enforce certain role norms for the performance of batters (Elder-Vass, 2010a), in order to collectively coordinate their intentions and actions around a batting strategy. However, by not collectively coordinating their own actions as coaches, by lacking what Goffman (1959) described as sufficient discipline of a performance team, their individual attempts to manage

some of the ambiguity of their shared contextual circumstances, also (unintentionally) *created* further ambiguity for the players. Should they respond to the role norms for batters advocated by Sam (i.e., to play in a more attacking manner), or to those proposed subsequently by David (i.e., to not get out, or worry about increasing the scoring rate)? Here, in addition to the work of Raabe et al. (2017), who suggested that pathos can be created by the athlete having conflicting beliefs to the coach, the present study adds novel insights in so far as, when multiple coaches produce conflicting instructions or normative pressures, this can also create ambiguity or pathos which requires orchestrated responses from athletes. This reinforces the point that coaches 'are themselves part of the complexity processes they manage. They cannot differentiate themselves from it exerting stable, purposeful influence on others' (Tourish, 2019, p. 221).

Indeed, reflecting back upon his own and Sam's interactions with the team, David acknowledged that the message he delivered was different to that of Sam's, and this was an intentional (micro-political) act to alleviate some of the pressure that had been placed on the players (Jones et al., 2013):

> I think it's trying to nullify the sort of negativity – like [Sam saying] 12 runs short! What's that in a two-day game? Like, listening to his first part [what Sam has said to the players] is really interesting because there is nothing [in his feedback to say] that they have done well in that entire two minutes or whatever it is of chat. It's kind of what they [players] haven't done – we're fucking 148 [runs] for two [wickets]. You know, we started late didn't we, so really… we are in a great position, so there's no pressure on us at all really to do that. So, my thing of [saying] we'll score naturally enough, don't worry about that, start your innings again. You know, it's fairly, Sam has obviously said quite a bit [to the players], but my job there was to kind of analyse what he is saying, and obviously what you'll notice is the fact that I have never mentioned the fact of what he [Sam] has said, because I probably haven't liked what he has said, in terms of we're a little bit short [of runs]. So my natural instinct is to try and keep away from that… but it's also kind of contradicting [what Sam has said] at the same time. Cos, they [the other coaches] said lets be here for then [set a target for a specific time]. You know and I'm not really big on that, because that then limits the players to a target, whereas if they start their innings again they will bypass that target by quite a way. So I remember that conversation and I'm kind of just thinking, well yeah but there is not really much, so I'm conscious of not adding much because he [Sam] has said quite a bit. So I'm not going in repeating, saying something different cos I haven't known what he has said previous to that but it just, you know, a little bit more positivity and a little bit more praise would be good… and that will have an effect on the players… They [the players] have already identified that mid-off is the worst fielder so that shows that they are thinking at quite a high level and in my eyes that shows they have got the game under control if they are able to bat time. Erm, so there is not really much that needs to be said at that point, I don't think. Apart from

> start your innings again, don't get out straight after tea, keep going, get yourself back in, you'll score freely enough, don't worry, off you go.
>
> Stimulated recall interview with David (07 August, 2018)

For David, this reinforced or affirmed some of his thoughts in being cautious when trusting Sam and ascribing him the authority to take more ownership of coaching activities (i.e., running drills, or leading tactical conversations with players), as alluded to in section 6.2.2. Here, David also discussed how he perceived his own experience and knowledge to be superior to that of Douglas and Sam in dealing with such scenarios:

> That gives you an idea really of my levels of, not concern, but levels of like fucking hell, you know, 12 runs short of where we want to be! Haway. You know, that's an over's worth [of runs] in an hour's time, which it was… I've kind of eased the pressure, I've kind of said don't worry about that, so I don't know how that is perceived by Sam. I don't know at all how that is perceived by Sam, because Douglas will naturally agree with and follow the person that is in charge. So, he'll not be contradicting at all what Sam is saying. So if they [the players] are getting very specific targets from two of the three people [coaches] and I come in and say don't worry about it then that hopefully eases the pressure and they go out an just play their natural game and don't worry about where they are [what the score is] at drinks… But again that is experience of me playing [the game] and me being part of teams that have managed two- or three-day cricket before… That's really interesting because I'm obviously not there for the first part, so they, Sam has obviously tried to take control, but he has done it in his own way, which is what I want, but then it's kind of like not the way that I would go. So then like well how much does he know about what I am like, and what I am trying to do? You know, there is not that knowledge there, which is what you need if you are going to be part of a coaching team… Yeah, I mean there's sometimes where I'd want Sam to lead stuff, purposefully. There'll be times in the season [where I say] do you want to do that, or do you fancy, are you alright to do that? But that probably doesn't happen as often as it should, purely because of like *that* [the example that we are discussing]. And that kind of has a sort of rigidness and regimented sort of outlook on things, that like, is the opposite to what I try and do.
>
> Stimulated recall interview with David (07 August, 2018)

As well as orchestrating by attempting to shape the actions of athletes, David here also orchestrated pathos and ambiguity created by himself and Sam having different outlooks on targets, or, specifically, how to achieve them (Santos et al., 2013).

As indicated in this example, individuals are often required to negotiate complex and cross-cutting norms (Elder-Vass, 2010a). Actions of individuals are not governed deterministically by all-encompassing singular norms which transcend all cultures (Bhaskar, 2015; Jenkins, 1982). Instead, an eminent feature in contemporary society is the overlapping, and often contradictory

clashing of norms – coined the '*intersectionality*' of norms by Elder-Vass (2010a). Here, 'individuals become the sites of normative intersectionality and *society* becomes a patchwork of overlapping or intersecting normative circles' (Elder-Vass, 2010a, p. 133). The dialectics of coaching, then, often take multiple, intersecting forms manifest in complex interactions between coaches and athletes with 'ambiguous and potentially contradictory conditions, processes, and consequences' (Collinson, 2014, p. 48). Indeed, rather than being stable, immutable guides to social practice (Gibbs, 1965), the influence of norms through (inter)actions that observe, endorse and enforce them are *contingent* upon contextual circumstances; individuals require an ability to understand which norm applies under specific circumstances to be effective in their roles. Actions are, therefore, often both (causally) influenced by social structure (i.e., stored dispositions resulting from interaction with norm circles) *and* conscious reflexivity (i.e., the capacity to think and make decisions) (Elder-Vass, 2007b). In determining the true influence of coaching practice on others, there is a need to consider the multiplicity of norms which may be interacting or 'intersecting' to underpin action, and, importantly, how agents might choose between these norms (if they are contradictory). Thus, as in the example presented, when the players were presented with conflicting norms, a conscious decision had to be made as to which norm to follow (Elder-Vass, 2007b).

> The umpires reposition the bails in preparation for the restart of play after tea. Intent was immediately shown by Jamie when he looked busy at the crease [attempting to score from the first ball] before then successfully hitting a four [played attackingly] over the top of mid-off [the fielder] in the second ball after the tea break. This was something that we had not seen Jamie attempt to this point in the game; previously he had played much more conservatively when batting. Conversely, Roger seemed to continue to bat in the same manner in which he had done before the tea interval – without too much concern to score at an increased rate. I wondered what the perceived influence of the coaching practice from the players' perspective was here.
>
> *Field note extract (17 July 2018 – Play resumes after the tea interval)*

During subsequent stimulated recall interviews in which the coaches and players explained their experiences, Roger (who had more closely responded to David's coaching) described how he had been more strongly influenced by David (head coach) than Sam (assistant coach):

> *Roger:* 'It was good to have David back because, err, just a bit of like reassurance really. Erm, kind of just saying… [we] don't really need to worry about scoring too much and that kind of takes the pressure off me and Jamie, err quite a lot I think.

> Knowing that we don't have to go out all guns blazing, we can just take our time… What Sam was saying was maybe a bit different to what David was saying, so we kind of took more on board what David was saying. Sam was saying like try and maybe push the field out, manipulate the field, whereas David was saying just don't worry about scoring and just take your time and I think we took David's words a bit more on board than Sam's words'
>
> *Athlete stimulated recall interview (23 July 2018)*

When probed about why he responded most to David than Sam, Roger went on to say:

> *Roger:* 'His [Sam's] role is just reminding us what we need to do, and erm, kind of not the technical side of things… what we need to do to achieve the goals, not maybe how we are going to do it… It sounds bad but I wouldn't take Sam's words as maybe seriously as erm, David's, because that's not his role as a coach. I think his role is just, erm – be there, a bit of humour, constant reminders of what we need to do basically… you lean toward maybe a bit more like the senior coach… I spoke with Jamie and we said we were just gonna take our time and be patient, maybe not go out all guns blazing from the start, which is kind of exactly what David was saying'.
>
> *Athlete stimulated recall interview (23 July 2018)*

Roger's words here underline the point made in section 6.2 that organisations (e.g., sports teams; and their collective performances) can be demarcated from simpler social forms (i.e., associations) on the basis that they have specialised roles and authority relations between members (Elder-Vass, 2010a). Both these role specifications and capital – the different forms of power that determine the position and influence of an actor in a social network (Bourdieu, 1986) – afforded to individuals within these roles contribute to such authority (Elder-Vass, 2010a). When referring to the *more senior* coach, Roger highlighted that he afforded greater social, cultural and symbolic capital to David in comparison to his assistant coach, Sam. As Elder-Vass (2010) explains: 'role incumbents only accept and follow instructions from their managers to the extent that those managers have, through their role incumbency, the right to make such a request' (p.159), and 'the differential influence of competing norms depends on the influence of power' (p. 29).

Here, coach and athlete identities did not exist as a stable 'innate dualism between those with agency and those with less'; instead, they were evolving, and communicatively co-constructed through dynamic processes of (situated and historical) interaction between organisational actors (Tourish, 2019, p. 221). Indeed, the agency of athletes played an important role in the development and maintenance of coach identity and influence (DeRue & Ashford, 2010; Potrac, Mallett, et al.,

2017). Thus, the differential influence of competing norms and power relations was felt and required resolution by Roger when performing. It could be said here, then, that the norm circle relating to these role norms (as endorsed by David on behalf of the norm circle and stored as dispositions through habitus) causally influenced Roger's actions, alongside his capacity to consciously reflect and deliberate (e.g., deciding between norms and which shot to play), up until the action-implementation phase (i.e., physically playing the shot) (Elder-Vass, 2007b). Further, this data reinforced the point that norm circles do not just relate to physical or performative (practical) *acts* of agents. There are also norm circles which endorse or enforce norms about validity criteria relating to social rules, specifying the conditions under which a person is able (or not) to make a knowledge claim: these are known as epistemological circles (Elder-Vass, 2012a). In this case, the influence of epistemological norm circles were felt in determining *which* coaches were able to make claims about the style of performance that should be adhered to. In (un)consciously reflecting, Roger made reference to both the indexical and regulative norms (as outlined in section 6.2.2) which identified the role of Sam (as assistant coach) and what his behavioural expectations were, respectively (Elder-Vass, 2012a). As assistant coach, Roger felt that the norms regulating Sam's role did not provide him with the authority to structure the game plan or to instruct athletes on how they should perform in this case. Indeed, this role (in the eyes of Roger) remained firmly with David. In contrast, Sam's role was perceived as being simply to remind players of what had been already been set out (as the game plan) by David. These social forces did not *determine* (who was able to authorise or what constituted) knowledge claims, however; often our experiences of the world also tend to produce authorisation of the reliability of such claims (e.g., whether or not the advocated style of batting worked in practice, and how this had been experienced in previous interactions with coaches, for example).

Interestingly, Roger also alluded to himself and Jamie coming together in an effort to resolve the competing norms espoused by their coaches in order to collectively coordinate their intentions for action on the pitch. This valuably reinforces the notion that athletes too 'have agency in the constructing of coaching' (Jones & Ronglan, 2018, p. 9), and again points to the possibility that it

is not just coaches who orchestrate, but also athletes. For instance, the athletes here had instigated, planned, organised, monitored and responded to evolving circumstances through (inter)active acts (Jones & Wallace, 2005). This positions coaches less obtrusively. Instead of rationalistically controlling the actions of others, they push, pull and cajole in *attempt to* improve performance (Santos et al., 2013). Despite both players apparently agreeing to follow the role norm promoted by David, Jamie actually appeared to respond more closely to Sam's strategy of playing more aggressively. Indeed, this finding points to the (general) strategic social interaction engaged in by athletes. Suggesting why Jamie might have acted against the stated plans, and further highlighting the complex context(s) in which coaches attempt to be influential and athletes attempt to perform, Roger drew attention to the mediating role of athletes' perceptions of their own skills and abilities in consciously resolving the competing role norms:

> *Roger:* 'Jamie – he's a lot different a player to me – like I wouldn't have done that [hit over the top of the fielders], but he knows he can… [With] a bit of reassurance at tea of what he needs to do, like Jamie was thinking, right I know I can do that, I'm just gonna back myself… I kind of thought, that's maybe not my game so I'm not gonna try and do that, but Jamie – that is exactly his game, so he would have thought, right that's giving me, not a licence, but like an opportunity to try and hit over the top. I think it was different for Jamie – I think he would have taken more… to what Sam was saying than David, whereas for me I think it was more David than Sam… I knew that Jamie – I've played a lot of cricket with Jamie – they're his strengths, so I knew that if I could stay with him [not get out], he'd be going at six [runs] an over, something like that. I was never gonna try and belt it over the top until I was in, and set. Whereas Jamie knows he can, so yeah – I think Jamie would have reacted really differently to what I would have'.
>
> *Athlete stimulated recall interview (23 July 2018)*

Jamie and Roger's divergent responses to their coaches underscores an important but often ignored consideration in much existing coaching research: coaching practice will frequently have a *heterogeneous* as opposed to a homogeneous, consistent and deterministic influence on all athletes within range of the practice (Horn, 2008). Reinforcing this point, and confirming Roger's assessment (above), whilst watching footage of his exchange with Sam in a recall interview, before he was even asked a question, Jamie commented:

> *Jamie:* 'That [Sam's coaching practice] influenced the way I batted – that – when he said hit it over then you, I was thinking if I hit it over [the fielders] I can probably push the men back and start milking singles [taking run opportunities] to them…'.

Athlete stimulated recall interview (22 July 2018)

When asked if he would have done this without what had been said by the coach, Jamie replied:

> *Jamie:* 'Probably not – no – because hitting over the top can be reckless, you can get yourself out to it, so like it was almost like giving permission to hit over the top and back myself to hit over the top, so I tend not to, I'd have probably tried to pierce the gaps along the floor if that wasn't said… it gave me more of a *license* as such to be attacking and play with more intent, which I like'.
>
> *Athlete stimulated recall interview (23 July 2018)*

These excerpts show that the role norm ascribed by Sam (i.e., to increase the run-rate and score faster), differed from the role norm ascribed by David, in which getting out by playing in a more aggressive manner might have been considered to be poor performance. David's espoused norms aligned with Roger's playing style, but the strategy advocated by Sam better fitted Jamie's preferred playing style. Jamie was clear that Sam's (inter)action was influential because it reassured him that he would be less likely to be accused of 'reckless' play, a label that would have been problematic for him in this context. Consequently, despite creating some conflict and uncertainty, the coaches' interactions also afforded each player greater agential freedom to decide how best to play in response to the various norms being endorsed at the time. As such, in *assessing the suitability* of claims made by coaches, athletes had accounted for the way in which the claim matched their own skillsets, as well as the perceived consequences of acting with (or against) the content of the claim. A more detailed discussion of how these athletes were able to use their agency to orchestrate ambiguous (contradictory) goals is developed in section 6.7.3.

6.7.2 *The relational and historical (unintended) influence of coaching (inter)actions on multiple athletes*

Exploring these points further drew attention to the relational dimensions of norms and the fact that athletes may not have just been deliberating on normative pressures being endorsed in the present, but also those that had been endorsed in the past. A good example of which came from an earlier point in the same match as the example depicted in section 6.7.1. The following excerpts, then, highlight the contextual and temporal nature of social practice; people's present (inter)actions

are situated not only in space (e.g., a set of immediate relations and circumstances), but also in time – shaped by historical (inter)actions, which in turn influence the possibilities of future (inter)actions (Elder-Vass, 2010a). In this sense, action 'is a continuous, cyclical, flow over time: there are no empty spaces where nothing happens, and things do not just begin and end' (Fleetwood, 2005, p. 203).

> The score is 64 for the loss of no wickets after 15 overs played. John, one of the opening batters plays a loose shot and is very close to losing his wicket early in the days' play. The ball misses his bat and hits him on the pads [protective equipment worn on the legs of batters] before a huge appeal from the opposition. The umpire shakes his head and indicates that the batter is not out.
>
> *Sam*: [Breathes in sharply and audibly].
>
> *Douglas*: 'Careful' [not loud enough for John to hear, but loud enough for others to hear].
>
> *Sam:* [to Douglas] 'I tell you what it is, some umpires would have given that out just for the shot… [for all to hear] Work hard, John, WORK HARD!'
>
> John immediately responds by playing more defensively. He goes on to score 54 runs for the team before he is bowled out (despite playing in a defensive manner).
>
> *Field note extract (17 July 2018 - Early in the day's play)*

This occurrence was early in the day's play when the role norm for batters was to build a 'solid base' (i.e., not lose their wicket), while scoring at 50 runs per hour as a team. Indeed, throughout the ethnography (as highlighted in section 6.3.3), the head coach, David, frequently set out his expectations that players should not play in a reckless manner:

> *David:* [to the squad] 'Session by session, hour by hour – focus on our batting and bowling targets… there is a clear line between being responsible and reckless. So today, or tomorrow when we are batting is not a day to be reckless… Today will be a day to be thoughtful and to execute your skills properly.'
>
> *Field note extract (03 July 2018 - Before play on the first game of the season)*

To ensure that all players were aware of this expectation, David had also included the message on the posters placed around the walls of the changing room (see section 6.3.3). Importantly, though, it was not the message *per se* (i.e., the poster) that causally influenced the athlete's actions; it was the norm circle – the strength of commitment among the group of coaches and athletes to observe, endorse and enforce the norm – that causally influenced

action through storing the norm as a disposition (alongside other entities) (Elder-Vass, 2012b). Indeed, David's notion of 'building a solid base' early in the game would not have had so much influence had it merely been considered by individual coaches or players; its influential power was realised because of the set of relations and commitments between actors that generated a collective batting norm (existing in dispositions within individuals) for that stage of the match (Elder-Vass, 2012a).

Sam's urgent interaction with John to 'WORK HARD' was an example of his initial endorsement of David's espoused norm; it condemned an act which was perceived to deviate from the role norms of batters (at this stage of the match), and endorsed the need to bat conservatively (Elder-Vass, 2010a). Here, Sam indicated that he attempted to remind John of his responsibilities as a player:

> Upon being asked what his intentions were behind asking John to 'WORK HARD' earlier in the day, Sam indicated that he hoped it would remind John to play cautiously.
>
> *Field note extract (17 July 2018 - A discussion with Sam whilst walking round the pitch)*

Sam had noticed potential pathos in that, if the team lost their opening batter, their goals may have become less likely to be achieved. As such, he orchestrated (Readdy et al., 2016), endorsing the norm (to play cautiously) in attempt to manage this pathos. Interestingly, despite being directed at John, Jamie and Roger, who at the time were in earshot of this interaction, felt that it had also influenced them:

> *Jamie:* they're [coaches] saying that's a silly shot and they don't want you to play anything daft. So, I'm probably thinking when I get in just don't do anything stupid; let's play straight and be careful when you get in.
>
> *Player stimulated recall interview (22 July 2018)*

> *Roger:* with Sam having a negative reaction towards that [John's play] we're thinking like what not to do – which is that. So we know when we first get in [to bat] we know not to do that. It's helpful because then you know what shots you need to play, what shots you don't need to play.
>
> *Player stimulated recall interview (23 July 2018)*

Thus, Sam's actions (on behalf of the organisation and enacting his own role norms of being seen to support the message of the head coach), to endorse and enforce a role norm, had strengthened Jamie and Roger's intent to play conservatively. Elder-Vass' (2007b) work would imply that the process of socialisation (Jamie and Roger experiencing and interpreting endorsement and enforcement of the norm over time) had likely served to strengthen connections (frequencies) between neurons and groups of neurons at a physiological level in the athletes' brains relating to the norm of acceptable performance, which acted as a structuring disposition (i.e., habitus; Elder-Vass, 2010). This again addresses the important, but widely ignored claim in coaching research – that coaching practice can have intended and unintended consequences (Denison, 2007; Jones et al., 2013). It problematises conceptualisations of coaching which portray influence in a dyadic manner, as if coaching practice (e.g., motivational feedback) produces stable outcomes (e.g., competence, intrinsic motivation and objective performance) for the intended target of the practice at that time only (e.g., Fransen et al., 2018). Rather than existing as a dualism between influence or noninfluence on one athlete, this data implies that (non)influence is often much more dialectical; (inter)action can have a wider influence (or not) on multiple agents. Although the actions of Sam in the present study were intended to shape the behaviour of John, they also had a wider influence on other players, through their noticing of this action, as it causally contributed toward the enforcement of role norms. Indeed, Jamie and Rogers' initially conservative approach when they entered the match was influenced by unconscious reference to this habitus alongside conscious reflexivity (Elder-Vass, 2007b).

When later playing in a more attacking manner (please refer to section 6.7.1), Sam had endorsed and Jamie enacted different role norms (to those presented in the current section), in response to the evolving circumstances of the match. The present organisation, then, combined 'highly regulated task-focused roles, where the role and its expected behaviours are specified in detail for a variety of types of task, with far more flexible roles charged in very general terms with ensuring the coordination of the others' (Elder-Vass, 2010a, p. 136). In this regard the coach's role included 'the development of the role specifications themselves and their continuing elaboration in

response to the goals, performance and circumstances of the organisation' (see section 6.2.2) (Elder-Vass, 2010a, p. 136). Indeed, as the role norm to attack more was elaborated, so too the wide felt strength of commitment to play more conservatively was diminished in response to the emergent circumstances of the team's performance. Consequently, Jamie perceived there would be less severe consequences in the event that he got out playing an attacking shot later in the match, compared to playing the same shot and getting out in earlier in the batting innings. As Elder-Vass (2012b) explains, early in the match there was 'general conformity with the rules' because the rules were widely enforced and endorsed, but 'transgression and change are also possible, whether as a result of deliberate innovation or as an unintended consequence of non-compliance, because there are also other social forces (and indeed physical forces and individual reflexive agency) influencing our behaviour.' (p. 15). In his own words, the change sanctioned by Sam (as outlined in section 6.7.1) had given Jamie 'permission' and a 'license' to hit over the top of the fielders, which conformed to his preferred style of batting.

Picking up an earlier point, in making his judgment about how to bat, Jamie, too, referred to the capital he afforded to Sam as a coach:

> *Jamie:* 'If you listen to them [coaches] it will benefit you as a player, definitely. I'm thinking right, he knows what he is talking about, Sam, he's been around a long time – he's played a high level of cricket, do what he is saying'.
>
> *Athlete stimulated recall interview (22 July 2018)*

In fact, Jamie, appeared to afford similar levels of capital to both coaches:

> *Jamie:* 'He is very knowledgeable [David], he knows the game inside out… He'll know if something is wrong… he can help [to] improve that, so if you listen to David you'll pick up some very good points. He's got a high-level cricket brain basically – he's played a lot of high-level cricket himself'.
>
> *Athlete stimulated recall interview (22 July 2018)*

Jamie perceived both David and Sam to possess symbolic capital, derived from their experiences as players and cultural capital, as a result of their long involvement within the game (Bourdieu, 1986), providing each of them with appropriate cultural knowledge in his eyes to be in a position to shape the role norms. In contrast, where athletes (i.e., Roger) afford coaches less capital (i.e., Sam), this

can limit their ability to (act on behalf of the organisation and) causally influence the structural expectations or norms relating to the individual roles of athletes (Potrac, Jones, & Armour, 2002).

Interestingly, relating back to a point earlier introduced in section 6.2.2, despite Jamie coming to understand that David was the head coach and thus was more responsible (than Sam) for telling players what to do (technically and tactically), he still decided to act in accordance with Sam's suggestions:

> I'd, err, pro- I think they play different roles, slightly so erm,… … David is kind of the head coach obviously and he… takes more of a hard… hard role in kind of speaking to people – telling them what they have done wrong. Whereas Douglas is more of an upbeat character I would say. Erm, helping with players' confidence at the time and stuff, if they are not in form or something. And then Sam is around helping with the coaching as well – he's probably more similar to Douglas, again. And David is probably more technical/tactical than the others, I'd say. I don't think David is like a bad cop – you know, he still gets on well with the players, and what not. Err, and he's, he just kind of tells it as it is and will tell you, you have played a bad shot there, or something, you know – someone has got to do it, so. I think that's what David's role [is].
>
> *Semi-structured interview with Jamie (22nd July 2018)*

Here, Jamie had understood the indexical norm (which positioned David as head coach) and thus the regulative norms which suggested that David was responsible for *telling* athletes how they should perform or what they might have done wrong. Further, he had demonstrated understanding of the indexical norm (which positioned Sam as assistant coach) and thus the regulative norms which suggested that Sam was responsible for *helping* (i.e., with players' confidence) as opposed to instructing. This illustrates that despite being aware of the authority roles and relations (and the consequences of these in terms of who was able to shape role expectations or not), these relations did not *determine* action (Elder-Vass, 2012a). Instead, Jamie had consciously deliberated on the fact that, irrespective of the roles (and expectations for role behaviour) of coaches, the playing style advocated by Sam more closely aligned with his preferred playing style. Consequently, he decided to act in accordance with this method of batting.

6.7.3 *Achieving skilled social performance*

After tea, as the match wore on, despite playing in ways that conformed to (and simultaneously transgressed) the differing role norms sanctioned by the head coach and assistant

coach, both Jamie and Roger were heavily praised for their performances, each going on to score over 100 runs. Indeed, neither player was challenged by either coach for their non-compliance with the differing batting strategies that had been advocated in section 6.7.1. David alluded to why he chose not to enforce the norm of batting for long periods, when Jamie played in an aggressive manner straight after tea:

> It was evident that they [Jamie and Roger] had a plan from the first over going out, really… The idea of saying we don't need to worry about the runs was because you wanted them to play freely anyway. So, the relationship that we had would suggest that, erm, they would, I would want them to play as freely as possible anyway, so I don't think that – yeah, I would never be – if he got caught, it's the execution, so if he gets caught at mid-off second ball after tea you think what the fuck is he doing? Erm, but I suppose the confidence and the understanding of what he is trying to do then shines through and the commitment that he would give to the shot meant that he was successful with that… But that is what you want them to do, I suppose. You want them to play with confidence and with freedom, so then they are able to, I suppose, back themselves. It's a risk isn't it, but it's brave… I suppose you cannot really knock him [Jamie] for being brave can you? But if he gets it wrong then you would question why he is doing it straight after tea, erm, and I suppose in hindsight it sets the tone for the session really… But you probably wouldn't want them to take – you wouldn't suggest that to them – taking a risk, I suppose. It's just how the day went for him wasn't it? He got his first hundred and played well… You want them to be flamboyant and you want them to make mistakes. It's not the end game in the under 17's. So if he does get it wrong second ball after tea, you might give him a bollocking, question his application, blah, blah, blah, but really it's just part of his development, but then if he sees that he can do that then he has flourished under our sort of guidance really, and our support, which is what you want.
>
> *Semi-structured interview with David (14 March 2019)*

According to Elder-Vass (2010a):

> there are always reasons why *some* norm transgressions do not meet with norm-enforcing reactions… there is always a degree of uncertainty about the current normative environment, though with stable institutions the balance of support for the prevailing norms will tend to be clear enough for all competent members of the group to understand them (p. 135).

Here, more 'general role norms' (i.e., scoring a high number of runs – see section 6.3.2) were also evident (Elder-Vass, 2010a). So long as batters scored a high number of runs, coaches were unlikely to relate back to (punish) other intersecting role norms which had not been rigidly conformed to. The balance of support for this prevailing norm was made clear to all in various ways, but most plainly during a briefing given to his new squad of players by David at one of the first indoor training sessions of the season:

> *David:* 'The first thing that you have to do is perform consistently… You have to understand that the first thing that you have to do is score runs and take wickets… so if you look at your own stats and you've got one senior fifty. In your life [with raised eyebrows and blowing air from puffed out cheeks]. And you know, you're a batter. Then, how can you be expecting to push a level up... The challenge is down to you'.
>
> *Field note extract (18 February 2018)*

Further, David even showed his satisfaction with the first attacking shot after tea from Jamie by verbalising his thoughts (in a manner which would not have been able to be heard by the batters in the middle but was audible to those standing close by to him), saying: 'shot' after the ball had been hit for four runs. Being widely understood, these general role norms (i.e., to score runs) were not solely limited to the squad studied; they are norms that have been socially constructed and remain universally endorsed (by the wider cricketing fraternity) to indicate the successful performance of role incumbents (e.g., batters). Although these role norms are general to cricket as a whole, they can only be sustained and reproduced as long as they are endorsed and enforced within the proximal norm circles (i.e., by the people with which a specific player interacts).

Exercising their agency within structural limits, Roger and Jamie had conformed to (and variously transgressed) differing local role norms (i.e., those specialised to the organisation and not necessarily accepted by the wider cricketing fraternity) presented by the head coach and assistant coach. However, in navigating the uncertainty and pathos of these contradictory goals, the athletes had conformed to a more general norm (to score runs for the team), which had sufficiently satisfied the coaches to avoid negative sanctions associated with violations of these local norms (Elder-Vass, 2012a). By doing so, they each executed skilled social performances in the face of normative intersectionality (Elder-Vass, 2010a). Such capable inter-action depends upon 'the possession by the individual of a sophisticated practical consciousness of the diversity, applicability and extent of the normative circles in which they are embedded, and indeed of others to which they are exposed' (Elder-Vass, 2010a, p. 133). In other words, athletes are not docile, passive, recipients of monological coaching practice. Indeed, in alignment with the work of Raabe et al. (2017), I suggest that athletes also engage in orchestrative practice as they respond to the orchestration of their coaches.

Building upon Rabbe et al.'s (2017) study, which provided broad themes focused on strategies used by athletes to orchestrate pathos, the present thesis provides fresh insights by considering the nuanced means through which (i.e., *what*, *how*, *why*, and *under which circumstances*) athletes orchestrate in relation to situated (inter)actions with others (i.e., coaches). For example, rather than simply illustrating that athletes orchestrate by maintaining a positive attitude (Raabe et al., 2017), the present study suggests that, when faced with conflicting pressures from (multiple) coaches, athletes orchestrate by engaging in conscious reflexivity to assess the relational consequences of acting in conformity with and (simultaneously) resisting these pressures. As such, their actions are influenced by both social structure (dispositions stored through interactions with norm circles) and conscious agential reflexivity (Elder-Vass, 2007b). This finding also challenges previous literature which presents conformity *or* resistance of followers (i.e., athletes) as crisply distinct categories (Collinson, 2019). Instead, building on more dialectical views of conformity and resistance (that athletes can conform with and at the same time resist the practice of coaches - e.g., Cushion & Jones, 2006; Purdy et al., 2008), it has been demonstrated that athletes can simultaneously conform with *and* resist the instructions of *multiple* leaders (i.e., coaches). The players' active awareness of the possibilities and structural constraints under which they were able to be realised in the present study was mediated by (inter)action and communication with others (Fairclough, 2005). Both coaches and athletes, then, are often required to observe, endorse and enforce a range of norms, intricately appreciating their indexical nature and temporal applicability within unfolding contextual circumstances (Elder-Vass, 2012a).

Here, coaches can more closely appreciate the means through which their (inter)active claims to leader agency are dialectically conformed with and resisted. In doing so, coaches can recognise that ambiguity is not inherently problematic (although it can be). Indeed, as demonstrated in the present data, ambiguity created through conflicting messages of coaches can actually serve to create room for greater conscious agential reflexivity. Here, in more closely acknowledging the means through which athletes' actions are informed, it is hoped that coaches will be able to humbly appreciate the *partial* role played by their own actions. In addition, it is hoped that athletes will be

afforded an opportunity to reflect upon the means through which skilled social performance can be achieved. Indeed, this remains a fertile area for further consideration. It is anticipated that thinking dialectically about (non)influence will help to support and develop the sociological literacy of coaches and those within their relational networks.

Another prominent example of athletes successfully navigating the extent, applicability and strength of norms was evident in another match. At one of the drinks breaks, David had asked Derek to play defensively and look to play the 'anchor role' (i.e., not get out and hit the ball into gaps to score singles, to allow his batting partner to score more attackingly – as alluded to in section 6.5.1):

> It is day two of a two-day home fixture. Nettleton are chasing 341 runs to tie (342 runs to win). The score is currently 59 runs for the loss of one wicket from 16 overs. Derek is on 36 runs (not-out) and has hit a number of boundaries against the fast bowlers. Jamie is on five runs not-out and is new to the crease [he has not long been batting]. At a drinks break, David questions the two batters and provides his observations on the situation:
>
> *David:* 'Well done, Derek – excellent that. Thoughts?'
>
> *Jamie:* 'We're ahead [on run-rate]'.
>
> *David*: 'Yeah. What about, I'm more interested in how many overs have the seamers bowled?'
>
> *Jamie:* 'They've bowled seven'.
>
> *David*: 'Yeah, so they're gonna be fucked [tired] later. Right. What are your observations about the field to the spinner?'
>
> *Derek*: 'They're in, [we can] hit over'.
>
> *David*: 'Yeah, so they've ringed it [put a close field setting in]. They haven't attacked at all have they? So that tells you what? What does that tell you in a positive way?'
>
> *Derek*: 'They're [the opposition] on the defence. They're not very positive'.
>
> *David*: 'Yeah, yeah – they're not confident. He's [the bowler] not confident about grouping the balls in the same spot [bowling the ball in a consistent area]. So you've [looking at Derek] got a couple there on the back foot. Mid-on and mid-off [fielding positions] are really close right. Your job is to do two things, Derek, now right: is to cement your place in the team for the rest of the year – and you'll only do that by batting and getting a half decent score, and two, play the anchor role. Right. Your [pointing at Derek's batting partner, Jamie] naturally more aggressive, especially when it's [the ball] going over the field. Make sure you wait for the right ball. Especially if mid-on [and] mid-off [fielding positions] are creeping in. Exactly like what you did last week (referring to the example introduced in section 6.7.1). Right, now we've got to get the balance right here because, because we have got so long to bat I don't, you know, I don't want you to give your wickets away by any stretch of the imagination – you have just got to be patient'.

Field note extract (25 July 2018)

Here, David had noticed an opportunity to influence the way in which the team could progress when batting (Mason, 2002). Specifically, he had noticed the field settings and bowling approach of the opposition, felt it best that Jamie played more of an attacking role and that Derek played more defensively to serve the tactical plan of the team. Indeed, in his interactions with the players he micro-politically acted in an attempt to influence the role norms of the two players (Elder-Vass, 2010a). He used this strategy to orchestrate some of the ambiguity present in that, if athletes did not play in this manner, it might have impacted the team's collective ability to enact David's overall goals for performance (Jones & Wallace, 2005). When asked what his intentions behind this practice were, David stated:

> Play as the anchor role, so you are giving him [Derek] a little bit of guidance in how – you don't want him to come down the track [move closer to the bowler to have more chance of hitting the ball attackingly] and get stumped [get out], when he is, you know, a nurdler and a nudger [more defensive batsmen] and he'll play like behind square on the off-side and use the pace of the ball. Whereas, Jamie, you know reiterating exactly what he did last week [score a hundred]. He is really close, wait for the ball and hit… make sure, I hate when you get caught and it goes flat, you've got to try and get it [the ball] over [the fielders]. And even if you don't quite get it and it goes up in the air, you know chances are that they are not going to get the catch, running behind. So, yeah, just making them aware that, you know, there is plenty – being positive, just trying to be positive.
>
> *Stimulated recall interview with David (07 August 2019)*

Further, the perceived influence of this practice on Derek and Jamie was stated:

> Hopefully give them understanding of, you know, stuff that I have said. It is just a confidence builder you know. They [the opposition] have got a ring field, they are not confident to do that, so you are going to get opportunities to do this. So if we are able to bat properly… so it's just a bit of a confidence builder in terms of, you know, giving them a little bit of guidance and a bit of direction but then giving them the freedom to then back themselves to play the ball where they want to. Cos I know if Jamie gets one through [the field], or gets one over, Derek might get a bad ball that suits his strengths and then they are both away [playing well], and there's no stopping any of them. Derek will get ones [single runs] and you know Jamie is going to push Derek with his running and his athleticism and stuff like that, so run scoring isn't going to be an issue if Jamie is able to bat a decent amount of time.
>
> *Stimulated recall interview with David (07 August 2019)*

Here, David had recognised that his actions in orchestrating were intended to provide direction and guidance to the players. Despite this, he also identified that his actions were intended to give players freedom (agency), especially where they got a bad ball from the bowler (opposition). After play had recommenced, Derek seemed to adopt an aggressive batting style:

> In the second over after play has recommenced from the drinks break, Derek hits the ball aggressively over the top of the fielders for six runs. This is greeted with praise from his team mates, but not the coaches who continue to observe and don't intervene:
>
> *Larry:* 'Shooottttt'.
>
> *John:* 'Shot, boi. Get up Derek lad'.
>
> *Field note extract (25 July 2018)*

This practice appeared to run dangerously close to contradicting some of the role norms which had been set out by David. Through Derek playing in an aggressive manner he ran the risk of losing his wicket, thus perhaps failing to play the 'anchor role'. However, given that he had hit the shot successfully for six runs, this did not result in a response from the coaches to punish an act which deviated from the norm. David eloquently reflected upon why he selected not to punish this act when watching footage of this shot back in a recall interview:

> Well obviously like you want them [players] to play as freely as possible. He ended up playing quite freely and scoring quite quickly – quicker than I thought. Erm, but the anchor role, yeah maybe he doesn't want to play the anchor role. Maybe he just thinks well I can do that [play more attackingly]. So, I don't mind that at all. He has waited for it and then gone for it. If he had of gotten out I'd have gone fucking ballistic. But at least he has got the bollocks to do it and he has hit it well. You know, happy days, I don't mind that at all.
>
> *Stimulated recall interview with David (07 August 2019)*

This example again points to the dialectical nature of conformity and resistance. Here, the athlete had resisted against the local role norm (to play 'the anchor role'), but simultaneously conformed with a broader, general role norm (to score runs). Fascinatingly, David had decided not to punish this act because he in fact recognised it as bravery. In recognising the degree of freedom (agency) that he afforded to the players, David appreciated that the act of Derek still conformed with a more general role norm (to score runs) because the shot had been executed effectively. Perhaps here, orchestration was enacted by David deciding to remain silent. He appreciated that by not intervening and punishing Derek's act, this afforded greater opportunities for players to utilise their

agency whilst still being likely to achieve the overall goals of the squad. When Derek had run dangerously close to deviating from the norm (i.e., by getting out playing this shot) and thus risked being punished for doing so, he had in fact taken a risk which had paid off, and had satisfied the more general role norm to score runs. Appreciating the indexical nature of the extent, applicability and strength of norms, he had achieved skilled social performance (Elder-Vass, 2010a). Interestingly, Derek stated how he perceived the talk at the drinks break with David to provide him with the confidence to play in such a manner:

> We [Derek and Jamie] had hit our first target and it was kind of going well. We had only lost one wicket and we were kind of above where we wanted to be in runs. So it was a lot more kind of. There was no like kind of do this, do that. It was just like this is all good. Keep on going, keep on going the way you are and kind of just building the confidence a bit. And then after that I ended up playing like a few more [attacking] shots and err I hit that nice straight six [laughs]. I wouldn't have really gone for that if err, like if it hadn't been for, if he [David] hadn't kind of been a bit more like boosting the confidence a bit in the drinks I think. I would have been a bit more cautious… If it wasn't for that I probably would have just driven it straight to mid-on [fielder] and it would have been a dot ball [no run]. I wouldn't have risked trying to hit it over the top. But I thought because of the kind of situation we were in, I thought it, you know, possibly if we can try and attack that spinner it might get him off and see what else [which other bowlers] they have got.
>
> *Stimulated recall interview with Derek (30 July 2019)*

This example provides further evidence that dispositions or beliefs do not fully determine action; it is both normative entities (i.e., beliefs stored through interactions with norm circles) and the capacity to make conscious decisions (i.e., to play attackingly in this instance) which influences action (Elder-Vass, 2012a). Coaching practice thus plays a role in influencing how athletes behave, act and perform, but performance itself is a multiply determined endeavour. Derek went into further detail about his thoughts on what David was trying to do at the drinks break, and how he interpreted the practice:

> Just kind of add a bit of support and like almost a bit of reward in a way of him saying, you know, well done, excellent I think he said. And then kind of a bit, oh yeah – it makes you feel good, and it makes you feel like you have done your job so far well in what he expected… And then asking us questions about the field. Instead of him just saying it he's kind of, he's getting us more engaged in it and making us think about it, so he is posing us questions about, erm, the bowlers and how the field is, making us realise more in that way about how they feel as a team. Showing that they weren't that confident – they were on the defensive a bit, and then also at the end what our aims were. So, you know to keep on batting – mainly not to lose a wicket.
>
> *Stimulated recall interview with Derek (30 July 2019)*

When discussing the 'anchor role' which had been set out as Derek's role norm by David, Derek commented:

> I think I knew anyway that I kind of did need to score some runs. Like there is a lot of good batsmen in the team… and there is a lot of good batsmen in the ages below and the teams below that will be wanting that position as well. So, I think, you know he has every right to say it [that I could cement my place in the team with a good performance]. It maybe added a bit too much pressure, because then you are thinking, ohh, you know I need this or I'm not going to be able to play any more games and stuff like that. But then, I think his intention, it worked well because it did make me think oh right, I've got to get more runs here, I've got to get more runs here. I've got to keep concentrating. But then, whether it made me worry too much about getting out and stop – not thinking about just batting and scoring runs might have like affected that in a negative way… It shows that he [David] is being honest – so that, you know, he is not just sugar coating stuff, and like it validates what he was saying before about being happy with how I was playing, because he doesn't, he tends not to mince his words, David. So, he's, you know, him saying that shows that he is just going to say what he wants to say, but then it also makes you feel like, well he probably, you know, he probably did mean what he was saying at the start. So, I think it was just like a bit of confidence from that. From the whole thing I think [the thing] I mainly got was confidence. And the pressure I was given from that just adds a bit more motivation, just you've got to be ready.
>
> *Stimulated recall interview with Derek (30 July 2019)*

This excerpt from Derek points to an interesting suggestion that when norms are endorsed and enforced, the *way in which this is done* by the coach can play a big part in how the practice is received by and thus influences (or not) the athlete. For example, here, because David was perceived to be straight talking, Derek trusted that his words were 'meant', authentic and sincere (Jones, Potrac, Cushion, Ronglan, & Davey, 2011). As well as endorsing or enforcing the norm, behaviours such as those employed at this drinks break can also have a wider influence on the sense making of the individual athlete. Reflecting upon his own actions in hitting the six after the drinks break, Derek referred to his reasoning behind this act:

> I think just… mainly what I took from that [talk with David] was positive. And also when he said – he asked about the field – one of the questions was is there anything you notice about the field and the spinners. And it made you think, oh well I remember, I said, my answer was that they [the fielders] were all in and you can hit over [them]. So that was then in my mind. I was thinking, oh right, he has pointed that out to us, so if he, so if this lad [the opposition bowler] bowls it where I want it, like a half-volley in that sort of area, then the risk of that shot is a lot less than it would be later on because the field is in. And if you can then… that was part of my game plan for that spinner. So, even if I can hit him over the top [of the fielders] once, it then – then they are likely to change the field, like they did… so then that opens up a much lower risk shot for runs. Cos I could just drive that ball for a single now, which… you're rarely gonna, well, you're less likely to get out to that shot than you are the

> other one. So then you can keep rotating the strike and you can keep scoring runs, and that was kind of exactly what we wanted at that point [in the game].
>
> *Stimulated recall interview with Derek (30 July 2019)*

It would appear that, in the case presented, Derek had in fact read and interpreted his role norms in an indexical[15] manner (Elder-Vass, 2012a). Indeed, in using conscious reflexivity Derek appraised the potential consequences of getting out playing in an attacking manner, and decided that when the bowler bowled the ball into a specific area he would be less likely to get out (and thus face the negative sanctions of resisting the norm). In doing so, and successfully performing the skill (hitting the ball for six), he stated that his game plan was to push the fielders back and then open up opportunities to rotate the batting strike to play the 'anchor role'. Here, then, Derek had orchestrated by thinking through and initiating a plan which was somewhat different to that set out by David. He recognised that, in doing so, however, he was still able to satisfy the overall goals set out by David for the team. In deliberating on the agency afforded to the players by David, Derek felt that acting in this way would avoid negative sanctions from others. Indeed, no coaches punished Derek for this action and David's excerpts above suggested that he 'did not mind' what Derek had done. It can therefore be said that Derek had achieved skilled social performance by acting in this way. When asked if he would have acted in this way had David not had the conversation at the drinks break, Derek explicated:

> I doubt it [that I would have played the same shot], I doubt it, cos I think I would have just been like. Cos it was almost a bit of a premeditated, not a premeditated shot because I wasn't gonna play it that ball, but I knew when that ball was [bowled] there [by the bowler], that was the shot I was gonna play, I was gonna hit it over. Whereas, if [I had] not [had the interaction with David at drinks], then I would have just been playing the ball as it comes, and probably just played it along the ground, a less, kind of a lower risk shot for that ball and I think, but because he was so positive about it, and he pointed it out, I think that's probably why I played it [the shot].
>
> *Stimulated recall interview with Derek (30 July 2019)*

Derek had noticed the role norms laid out to him and his batting partner at drinks by David (Mason, 2002), had interpreted some of the ambiguity which surrounded his attempt to perform in a certain

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[15] Indexical refers to the way in which more than one (role) norm is often required to make sense of a situation/relevant action. For example, in order to understand the role norms of a goalkeeper in football (i.e., the ability to use his or her hands to save the ball), we must also have an understanding of what and who constitutes a goalkeeper (Elder-Vass, 2012a).

way (i.e., that he may be punished if he did not execute the skill successfully and got out), and had micro-politically acted in a way which still served the overall role norms as laid out by the head coach, David (Jones et al., 2013). In other words, he had taken a risk in playing an attacking shot to change the field setting of the opposition. This was done in attempt to further his own chances of being able to bat for a longer period and play the 'anchor role' in line with the coach's stated expectations.

These findings challenge literature (e.g., Barnett et al., 1992; Chelladurai, 1984; Fransen et al., 2018; Jaakkola et al., 2016; Reinboth, Duda, & Ntoumanis, 2004; Smith et al., 1979; Smoll et al., 1993) which portrays the coach as a rationalistic, powerful being who can deliver behaviours or practices *to* athletes and have a resounding influence on their actions (e.g., suggesting that when coaches deliver particular behaviours this is likely to have a stable impact on athlete "outcomes"). Indeed, the present research suggests that the act of influence is much more complex (Jones & Wallace, 2005). Here, the current findings extend interpretivist work (e.g., Cushion & Jones, 2006; Purdy & Jones, 2011) which has attempted to explore how discourse can structure the coaching context and specific interactions. Studies of this nature have often implied that actions are guided by dispositions (influenced by the habitus of agents) and (to a limited degree) individuals' capacity for agency. However, few, if any studies have explored the mechanisms which explain *how* agents' situated actions can be influenced by these entities. Elder-Vass' (2010a, 2012a) theories of emergentism and (intersectional) norm circles help to offer one possible explanatory framework in this regard. As in the examples presented, orchestrated coaching acts often have a different influence to that originally intended. Coaching interactions (on behalf of the organisation or norm circle) can shape athletes' dispositions or beliefs, but these dispositions and beliefs always interact with the athlete's conscious capacity (agency) to shape their own actions. Hence resistance to normative pressures is possible. However, even when athletes' acts (dialectically) resist norms, this can still implicate a response which is effective in terms of working towards the overall aims or goals of the squad (e.g., to perform well and win), meaning that athletes are not punished or criticised for their own orchestrated actions.

6.7.4 *The intersectionality of familial norm circles*

Unexpectedly, in a recall interview with Alan, one of the players, another important consideration was unearthed in understanding the influence of coaching practice. Specifically, Alan alluded to the influence of his grandparent in also shaping his (inter)actions within the coaching environment and the complexities which this threw up for him:

> Sometimes, sometimes what my Granda [grandfather] says is a bit different to what the coaches say – I've had a bit of problems with that like. Kind of like, coaches say one thing and my Granda says the other, I always think I'll listen to me [my] Granda err more, you know what I mean like. I think my Granda has got good knowledge anyway. But, erm you still have to listen to the coaches as well though, so like you can't just blank them and like be huffy with them. You still have to like listen to them and be serious with the coaches, but I think I always try to like be on my Granda's side.
>
> I would, I always like to make my Granda like number one priority. Like, I always like to make him proud, more than the coaches – I'd rather my Granda feels better than the coaches. But erm, yeah like obviously I want the coaches to think I'm doing well. But I always like me Granda to… you know, I like [to] make him more proud.
>
> *Athlete stimulated recall interview (30 August 2018)*

Here, Alan highlighted problems caused by the different norms being enforced or endorsed by coaches in comparison to those endorsed or enforced by his grandparent. As with the earlier critical incident involving Roger and Jamie (please see section 6.7.1), Alan provided further support for the notion that athletes may select between such contrasting role norms by making reference to the capital they afford to individuals who have ascribed the norms (Bourdieu, 1990). Here, he afforded his grandfather with cultural capital in light of his (good level of) cricket knowledge. Interestingly, Alan also referred to his awareness that it would not be in his best interests to 'blank' or be 'huffy' with the coaches in light of this ambiguity being presented to him. This, then, perhaps refers to Alan's employment of 'face work' (Goffman, 1967), or impression management (Goffman, 1959), in order to mask his true emotions and frustration under such circumstances. When presented with differing role norms, again conscious reflexivity seemed to be utilised by Alan in deciding to conform to the role norms as ascribed by his grandparent as opposed to the coaches (Elder-Vass, 2007b). This aligns with the contention that 'the individual must sometimes negotiate a path that balances normative commitments that are in tension with each other' (Elder-Vass, 2010a, p. 143).

Although Alan appeared to staunchly support the norms laid out by his grandparent, he also recognised a need to micro-politically act (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a) in order to demonstrate 'seriousness' around coaches and satisfy his desire to make coaches think that he was performing well. Here, just as coaches have been shown to create an 'illusion of empowerment' when orchestrating (Santos et al., 2013), perhaps it could be said that Alan was attempting to give coaches an illusion that he was confirming to their norms, when in actual fact one of the most prominent sources of proximal endorsement causally influencing his action (through acting on behalf of the norm circle to shape dispositions and beliefs) was his Grandad:

> I just try to listen to my Granda. Always just want to take his advice more. Obviously I am gonna take the coaches' advice, but more like, [if] my Granda is telling us [me] one thing I'm gonna listen to him and like take the advice within the game.
>
> *Stimulated recall interview with Alan (30 August 2018)*

When probed further around why this was Alan's stance (to accept the role norms as ascribed by his grandparent over those of the coaches), he went on to say:

> Just cos he has taught us, like he's obviously made us [me] a decent player, I'd like to think, but erm, he has obviously like made us good and he has pushed us, I'm playing under 17 [at] Nettleton. He has got us [me] to that position hasn't he, without us playing county in the first place, so, yeah.
>
> You know, me and my Granda speak about cricket all the time – wey I'm with my Granda a lot, like I go down the XXXXX [cricket club] with my Granda… all we do is speak about cricket really, and he has loads of knowledge in it anyway and he has played cricket for a lot of years, at a decent standard as well, so, yeah I'm always gonna listen to me Granda I think more. I'm obviously not gonna blank the coaches or anything like that – I have obviously got to listen to them and take their advice as well.
>
> *Stimulated recall interview with Alan (30 August 2018)*

Here, Alan again ascribed cultural and symbolic capital to his grandfather in light of his knowledge and prestige or renown as a player, respectively (Bourdieu, 1986). This presents an added layer of complexity and has further implications for coaches in that the influence of their (inter)actions may be intersected by the actions of other stakeholders within wider relational networks (Potrac, Mallett, et al., 2017). Indeed, it presents an additional source of potential pathos for coaches to manage in so far as the operationalisation of their goals may be impacted by normative standards

endorsed by other stakeholders (e.g., grandparents). In referring to a specific example of such ambiguity from one of the outdoor matches, Alan went on to describe:

> Erm, yeah, I remember like it has been through the winter nets – all the way through to the season, like Sam – I had like my back lift [a technical term for where the bat is positioned before the bower bowls the ball], you know was quite wide and I tried to like, to make it better I've closed off my stance [batting position] a bit, and it has got my back lift a bit better, but Sam didn't see that and he keeps thinking my back lift is over there but it is not. My Granda has told us like I'm doing well, my back lift is still there, my Granda is telling us that I have worked on it, cos I did work on it. But Sam tried to then, I remember I hit a couple of nice fours at XXXXXXXX against XXXXXXXXXXXX, I got out, but and then my Granda – cos Sam said something to my Granda, my Granda kind of like shot him down – told him like saying no, no, he has worked on it, and then when I batted Sam looked at it, he was like ohh yeah he has worked on it. So like I obviously want to listen to my Granda. My Granda has told the coaches and the coaches agree with him, so, yeah.
>
> *Stimulated recall interview with Alan (30 August 2018)*

Again, what was evident in Alan's words here was that Sam, the assistant coach, had attempted to manage some of the ambiguity present (i.e., although Sam could not fully control the actions of Alan, he had intervened in an attempt to change a technical element of his batting in order to improve performance). Orchestrating in this way (Jones & Wallace, 2006), Sam had noticed (Mason, 2002) what he considered to be a fault in the athletes' technique and had attempted to modify this by influencing a local role norm for Alan (to adapt his back lift – where his bat was positioned when waiting for the bowler to bowl the ball). Simultaneously, Alan's grandfather played a role in endorsing what he considered to be adherence to the specific role norm. At one of the matches, this endorsement was in direct contrast with the actions of Sam who, according to Alan, continued to criticise his performance because in Sam's eyes it did not conform to the role norm. Here, Alan was required to negotiate ambiguity created by multiple stakeholders (his grandparent and coach) endorsing and enforcing the same norm (in a different way). This provides strong empirical support for the claim that normative institutions do not necessarily rest on evaluative consensus (Elder-Vass, 2010a).

Interestingly, Sam's (the assistant coach's) noticing then appeared to be influenced and shaped by his communication with Alan's grandparent (Corsby & Jones, 2020). After Alan's grandparent had suggested that his grandson was indeed conforming to the norm and that he had

been working on this aspect of his game, Sam changed his view of how closely he felt Alan was aligning to this norm. Here, Alan's grandparent had disagreed with the standards endorsed by Sam on behalf of the norm circle and took action directed towards changing those standards (Elder-Vass, 2010a). This meant that Alan no longer had to deal with ambiguity in the sense that his grandparent and coach appeared to then agree on performance standards which constituted the norm. His grandfather had orchestrated in attempt to close the gap between his own (noticing of) performance expectations and those of Sam. Indeed, Alan professed that he felt he had been aligning with the norm as laid out by Sam all along, but that Sam had failed to notice this performance. Throughout, his grandfather seemed to be afforded 'more power to effectively sanction behaviour' than Sam, and hence had 'more influence on the prevailing normative environment' (Elder-Vass, 2012a, p. 29). Now that there was mutual agreement between parties on Alan's performance conforming to the norm, there was no longer confusion in the endorsement of the same norm, and Alan was no longer required to negotiate ambiguity in terms of what he felt constituted the norm. Indeed, these findings resonate with the work of coaching scholars who have highlighted that parental involvement in coaching can have both positive and negative consequences for athletes (Gould et al., 2008; Smoll, Cumming, & Smith, 2011; Weiss & Fretwell, 2005). What the present data and theorisation adds, however, is a possible explanation of how athletes navigate the ambiguity faced when (grand)parents decide to intervene with the activity of coaching.

6.8 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to critically discuss *how*, *when*, *why* and *under which circumstances* coaches do (or do not) influence others and the mechanisms which explain such (non)influence. Adopting the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) and integrating Elder-Vass' emergentist theory of practice and the causal power of social structures (Elder-Vass, 2007, 2010a, 2012a) alongside Jones and Wallace's theory of orchestration (Jones & Wallace, 2005, 2006), I have been able to generate novel understandings of coach (non)influence. First, the chapter has introduced the specialised roles and authority relations between members of the organisation,

before discussing the implications of these for influence (e.g., through endorsing and enforcing specific norms at a general and local level). Thereafter, examples of sedimented cases have been provided which critically interrogate specific critical incidents where the actions of the coach were deemed to be influential (or not). Specifically, these critical incidents focus on: a) the importance of noticing for social structure to causally influence action (through storing beliefs or dispositions), b) coaching practice going unnoticed, c) coaches influencing performance in line with their original intentions, d) the performance of athletes as being multiply determined, e) the use of multiple behaviours (e.g., humour) to endorse and enforce norms, f) the multiple and heterogeneous influences of coaching practice, whereby athletes simultaneously conform with and resist (conflicting coach) instruction to achieve skilled social performance. Each incident is discussed and explained through reference to coach and/or athlete orchestration, and the influence of norm circles within an emergentist theory of practice.

Throughout, I suggest that coaches often orchestrate by endorsing and enforcing specific role norms which they consider to hold potential in increasing the organisation's capacity to achieve its objectives. Through (inter)action between coaches and athletes, these orchestrated acts (on behalf of the norm circle) *can* shape agents' (i.e., coaches and athletes') beliefs and experiences (stored as dispositions) which partially influence decisions made by these agents. Indeed, these decisions are causally influenced by both dispositions (which may be contradictory/conflicting) *and* conscious agential reflexivity to orchestrate in attempt to manage pathos. In turn, decisions themselves (and interactions surrounding them) can then further influence dispositions of that individual and perhaps the dispositions of others in an ongoing spiral-like manner. In sum, the fusing of orchestration and Elder-Vass' work has enabled this chapter to provide rich explanations of *how*, *when*, *why* and *under which circumstances* coaches do (or do not) influence others and the potential mechanisms behind such (non)influence. In the next section, I bring the thesis to a close by reviewing its contributions, its central findings, and the potential implications of these. Finally, I explore limitations of the thesis and provide possible future directions for work in this area.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

The crux of this thesis resides in its attempt to challenge dominant discourse in sport coaching, which suggests that coaching practice can have a direct, unfettered, homogeneous, and rationalistic influence on isolated athlete "outcome" variables; as if coaching is an act done *to* athletes in a social vacuum free from contextual contestation and negotiation (Scott, 2009). Addressing these issues, the principal aim was to investigate *how*, *when*, *why*, and *under which circumstances* coaches influence (or do not influence) others. In doing so, the work has presented a broad overview of the extant coaching literature and its development over time (Chapter 2). It has then reviewed, more closely, literature which has focused specifically on relationships between coaching practice and athlete "outcomes", in order to identify the 'known unknowns' and critically examine key philosophical and methodological issues which may currently be restricting our understanding of this complex phenomenon (Chapter 3). In light of these issues, in Chapter 4, I posit critical realism and an emergentist philosophy as a fruitful avenue through which the influence of coaching practice on others may be better understood. In particular, the theories of *orchestration* (Jones & Wallace, 2005, 2006), *an emergentist theory of action* and the *causal power of social structures (norm circles)* (Elder-Vass, 2007, 2010a, 2012a) are positioned as useful and complementary heuristic devices which are compatible with the ontology and epistemology of critical realism. Connecting these philosophical and theoretical concepts through to their methodological implications, in Chapter 5, I have introduced a specific approach to ethnography, using participant observation, semi-structured interviews and stimulated recall interviews. I have also discussed tools for data analysis according to the Critical Incident Technique (CIT). In the findings and discussion section (Chapter 6), I have then advanced an attempt to work toward Bhaskar's injunction that 'applied or practical critical realism – critical realism in action, so to speak – is, or should be the soul or heartbeat of critical realism' (Bhaskar, 2016, p. 78). Here, in line with Elder-Vass' (2010a) regional ontology of organisations, I firstly identified the parts of the organisation studied (i.e., the people – coaches and athletes) and the authority roles which helped to demarcate the relations between them. I then introduced some of the *general* and *local* role norms from the environment studied and how they were endorsed, enforced and interpreted, before

closely examining and explaining specific social events (i.e., examples whereby coaches had or had not played a role in influencing athletes), primarily through orchestration (Jones & Wallace, 2005, 2006), the causal power of social structures (norm circles) and the emergentist theory of action (Elder-Vass, 2007b, 2010a, 2012a). Specifically, in this section, I examined possible (fallible) answers to questions which are widely lacking in the current sport coaching corpus. Namely, within this thesis, I have attempted to address *what*, *how*, *when*, *why*, and *under which circumstances* coaching practice had (or had not) influenced others, in-situ.

7.1 Novel contributions to knowledge

In completing this thesis, I aim to have made the following novel contributions to knowledge:

- A more sophisticated and complex exploration of *what*, *how*, *when*, *why*, and *under which circumstances* coaching practice has (or has not) influenced others than has been achieved to date, which better resonates with the messy realities of practice. This has involved both *retrodiction* and *retroduction* to test, challenge, refine, problematise and generate new theory.
- In contrast to conventional research in coaching, which positions the coach as an agent who is capable of unproblematically managing complexity to foster positive outcomes *in* athletes, the present study considers the emergent and relational (inter)actions *between* agents and *how* different stakeholders (e.g., coaches and athletes) influence each other (or not). Rather than viewing influence as clearly distinct athlete conformity *or* resistance to coaches' practice as much of the literature base has done, this work extends our understanding of the ways through which athletes can simultaneously (dialectically) conform with *and* resist the normative pressures of (multiple) coaches.
- A rare understanding of the means through which (i.e., *how*, *when*, *why* and *under which circumstances*) actions are not influential, in direct contrast to the coach's original intentions.
- The implementation of a more complex bricolage of methods (and data analysis) to research the *influence* of coaching within an emergentist philosophical approach than has

been achieved before. Here, one key limitation of the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) is that participants often struggle to (accurately) recall events which form the stimulus for conversation in interviews (Angelides, 2001; Bott & Tourish, 2016). This can limit the quality, rigour and depth of discussion in line with the aims of the study. The present thesis demonstrates that incorporating the perspectives of multiple stakeholders (at multiple time points) can help to alleviate this limitation. Further, augmenting the CIT by conducting casual conversations with stakeholders in the field and incorporating the stimulated recall method (please refer to section 5.5 for more details) can also help to enrich precision and accuracy when identifying (and discussing) critical incidents in detail.

- A unique insight into the everyday practices and (inter)actions of coaches and athletes within a cricket environment.
- A response to Lyle's (2018) call for coaching research to ask: 'what happened next?', following the chronology of interaction/influence through in-situ investigation, and to establish links between coach behaviour and performance outcomes. Here, the present study is among the first to explore the temporal and emergent interactions between agents which constitute and develop leadership (Tourish, 2019).
- The implementation and deployment of a theoretical framework which has not yet been employed within the coaching domain (Elder-Vass, 2007b, 2010a, 2012a) to understand the influence of social structure and conscious reflexivity in shaping action.
- A first use of orchestration theory to understand empirical, *situated* face-to-face interaction (how orchestrated coaching practice can influence others) within a specific coaching context. Indeed, building on the embryonic body of work which has illustrated *what* and *how* coaches (Jones & Wallace, 2005; Readdy et al., 2016; Santos et al., 2013) and athletes (Raabe et al., 2017) orchestrate, in isolation from one another's situated acts, the present thesis adds a novel understanding of coach and athlete orchestration *in relation* (making reference to temporally emergent events and interactions). Here, augmenting orchestration with the work of Elder-Vass, the present thesis also provides fresh theorisation of *how*,

when, *why* and *under which circumstances* the orchestrated acts of coaches are influential (or not) through a close examination of (related) athlete orchestration.

7.2 A summary of the central research findings

The findings from this thesis contribute to, and extend the extant literature investigating the complex and social nature of sport coaching. Specifically, moving away from rationalistic, linear views of coach behaviour exerting a stable and immutable influence on particular athlete "outcomes" in isolation, this work positions the influence of coaching (inter)actions as a contingent and multiply determined endeavour. Building upon a small, emerging body of contemporary coaching research (e.g., Cushion & Jones, 2006; Potrac, Mallett, et al., 2017; Purdy et al., 2009; Purdy et al., 2008; Purdy & Jones, 2011) which has explored the relational (inter)actions of coaches and athletes and how these might influence subsequent (inter)action, this thesis adds a novel sophisticated theorisation of *how*, *when*, *why*, and *under which circumstances* coach-athlete (inter)action did (or did not) influence the actions of others.

Firstly, adopting the work of Jones and Wallace (2005, 2006), this study has shed unique insights into the orchestrative actions of coaches (and athletes) as they attempted to manage their ambiguous working conditions and pathos. To the author's knowledge, this is the first empirical exploration of orchestration theory which incorporates both the viewpoint of the coach *and* the athlete together. Coaches were found to (collaboratively) notice the (inter)actions of athletes and their colleagues (Mason, 2002), before making these observations accountable, observable and noticeable to others (Corsby & Jones, 2020). In doing so, coaches often acted in such a way to deal with the contingencies, possibilities, indeterminacies and uncertainty which formed an inherent feature of their environment (Jones et al., 2013; Tourish, 2019). For example, the notion that they could not fully *control* the actions of their athletes or fellow coaches (Collinson et al., 2018). Here, when coaches made their observations (e.g., of performance) noticeable, they often acted on behalf of the organisation or norm circle to endorse and enforce specific role norms in attempt to increase the likelihood of the team being able to achieve coordinated interaction and successful performance (Elder-Vass, 2010a). Because beliefs or dispositions can only exist at the level of the individual,

and not in some collective sense of social structure, the way in which agents (i.e., athletes and coaches) themselves *noticed* these (inter)actions of others (e.g., the head coach, assistant coach, team manager or other athletes) provided an important precursor for such (inter)action (through norm circles storing dispositions) to causally influence (alongside other entities) subsequent action (Elder-Vass, 2012a).

Importantly, when athletes did not notice or observe the (inter)actions of coaches or others, these specific (inter)actions could not play a role in influencing subsequent action (through the norm circle storing or strengthening dispositions or beliefs). For instance, in section 6.4.2 when David noticed the successful performance of the wicket-keeper, Lawrence, in making a successful catch and stumping the batsmen, he praised this performance. In doing so, he acted to endorse this as successful role performance, however, Lawrence stated that he had not noticed this coach behaviour. In other words, the event had been *realised unperceived*; it had occurred, but it had not been perceived or noticed by Lawrence (Collier, 1994). Here, this finding extends the (limited) work on orchestration which has sought to understand the sources of pathos experienced by coaches (Jones & Wallace, 2005; Readdy et al., 2016; Santos et al., 2013) and athletes (Raabe et al., 2017). The very fact that athletes may be unaware of coaching practice which was directed toward (and intended to influence) them creates pathos for both the coach and the athlete. Although events can exist realised unperceived for one athlete, this does not mean that the event is not capable of being *exercised* and *realised* (i.e., have the potential to causally influence subsequent action through the norm circle), for another athlete (Fleetwood, 2004). Indeed, this opens up the possibility to explain how the same (inter)action/behaviour delivered by the coach can have heterogeneous and often unintended consequences on different athletes (Denison, 2007).

When athletes do notice the (inter)actions of coaches, this has the potential to shape their subsequent actions through the causal influence of the norm circle (storing or strengthening dispositions or beliefs) and conscious reflexivity, alongside other entities (Elder-Vass, 2007b). Indeed, when athletes performed or acted in a manner which either aligned with or deviated from the role norms of the organisation, coaches frequently sought to endorse or enforce the norm. This

was evident in coaches making their expectations clear in team talks before the commencement of training sessions and matches, as well as ongoing feedback provided to athletes in light of their emerging performance(s). This feedback was provided through a variety of means (e.g., praise, humour, criticism, questioning), which was invariably delivered to athletes on an individual basis or in the presence of other athletes and coaches. For example, in section 6.5.1 when Michael hit the ball into a gap between the fielders and completed a run to get his batting partner on strike (was able to score runs), this was endorsed and enforced as successful role performance by Sam and Douglas. The norm (stored as a disposition) had likely been strengthened through synaptic and neural connections after Michael had noticed this (inter)action with the coaches (Elder-Vass, 2010a). Indeed, it would appear that he was sufficiently aware of this norm prior to enacting successful performance as well, which was influenced by both the norm circle (storing the experience as a disposition through making previous decisions after interacting with coaches and athletes) and his conscious reflexivity to think before acting in the present (Elder-Vass, 2007b). Here, extending the work of Raabe et al. (2017) who highlighted broad themes of *what* and *how* athletes orchestrate, the present thesis adds fresh understanding of the means through which athletes orchestrate by noticing the (inter)actions, endorsement and enforcement of others (e.g., coaches who also orchestrate). Through making decisions based upon this noticing (and storing decisions as dispositions), athletes are able to reduce the distance between the (expected) goals of their coaches and their own performance (in enacting these and their own goals).

Importantly, the norm (circle) did not dominate or control the actions of Michael in this critical incident. Later in the same session, he failed to score a run from the bowler and get his batting partner on strike. Although he was sufficiently aware of the norm (both consciously and unconsciously), his ability to perform and enact the norm was contingent upon myriad circumstances (e.g., the performance of opponents); it was *multiply determined* (Bhaskar, 1975; Elder-Vass, 2010a). This adds to our understanding of coach and athlete orchestration, in that some of the pathos faced by both parties is related to the notion that, even where athletes attempt to act in alignment with the goals of coaches (being influenced by their dispositions stored through

interactions with norm circles and conscious reflexivity), their ability to do so is impacted by a wide variety of entities (e.g., pitch conditions, opposition performance).

Norms were not only endorsed or enforced (and thus held the potential to causally influence action through norm circles storing or strengthening beliefs) when agents used praise or criticism. Indeed, humour was found to play an important and unique role in contributing toward the endorsement and enforcement of norms (Edwards & Jones, 2018). For instance, as depicted in section 6.6 during a high-paced fielding activity, when Norman threw the ball softly underarm (unlike the actions of others within the activity), David decided to use humour: "Looovely underarm throw, Norman, ha ha ha ha ha ha ha", before sarcastically repeating the throw with the squad's strength and conditioning intern. This act was intended to demonstrate to Norman that his action was not in alignment with the norm (to protect, endorse and enforce the norm; Elder-Vass, 2010a), without simultaneously breaking down the coach-athlete relationship (Edwards & Jones, 2018). David had orchestrated to reduce some of the pathos in that his goals for player performance (i.e., high intensity) were not being met. Thereafter, when Norman next had the ball, he threw it powerfully, overarm, which was then praised by David. This would imply that coaches can play a role in *influencing* the subsequent (inter)actions of athletes through acting on behalf of the organisation/norm circle, while recognising the agency sufficiently retained by athletes to act in accordance with, or against such norms (Elder-Vass, 2012a; Jones & Wallace, 2005). Again, it appeared that the athlete was able to orchestrate by using his noticing of normative endorsement to close the gap between his actual performance and the performance expectations of coaches. Importantly, it also demonstrates a need to consider that a range of behaviours can endorse or enforce the same norm, while having different 'collateral consequences' (e.g., had punishment as opposed to humour been used here, this may have had the potential to negatively affect the coach's relationship with athletes).

Among other entities, the influence of norm circles on agents is often manifest through multiple (cross-cutting, overlapping and sometimes conflicting) norms in contemporary society (please see section 6.7) (Elder-Vass, 2012a). This was particularly evident in one of the outdoor

matches, where two batters (Roger and Jamie) were presented with a range of (conflicting) norms to negotiate in the execution of their role performance as batters (please see section 6.7.1). Here, David and Sam had acted to orchestrate ambiguity present. David had been away from the match for a period of time (and was thus unable to observe performance), while Sam had noticed that the athletes' performances were moving away from the goals of the organisation. However, in failing to sufficiently coordinate their actions, the two coaches advocated the implementation of two different batting styles (one more attacking and one more defensive) to the batters. Raabe et al. (2017) valuably highlighted that contradictory beliefs between coaches and athletes could create ambiguity for athletes to 'work with'. The present study produces novel understandings in this area, in that (through orchestration), contradictory beliefs of different coaches can also present ambiguity and pathos for athletes to navigate.

Roger and Jamie were thus required to make a conscious decision as to which norm they would aim to enact. They were influenced by both normative pressures (i.e., norm circles) and conscious reflexivity. Specifically, conscious reflexivity was engaged in by athletes to reflect upon the levels of power that they afforded to the two coaches, the relational consequences of acting in alignment with or against the instructions put forward by David and Sam, and the changing nature of normative pressures faced for different situations in the game. For example, the norm endorsed by Sam to play conservatively when John played in a reckless manner (which also had a heterogeneous influence on Jamie and Roger) earlier in the day's play now had less applicability in the eyes of Jamie (please see section 6.7.2). This provides novel insights into the means through which athletes orchestrate pathos when they respond to the orchestrated acts of coaches; while being normatively influenced in conflicting ways, athletes consciously deliberate in attempt to manage ambiguity. In doing so, Jamie went on to play much more aggressively, while Roger continued to play in a conservative manner. Here, this finding critically challenges portrayals of influence whereby athletes either wholly conform with *or* resist coaching practice (i.e., conformity and resistance exist as crisply distinct categories). Instead, it presents novel theorising of the subtle and dialectical means through which athletes simultaneously conform with *and* resist the normative

pressures of (multiple) coaches. Both athletes demonstrated an ability to execute skilled social performance (Elder-Vass, 2010a), each appeasing different local norms, while conforming to a more general norm (to score runs as a batter). As such, they were able to sufficiently read the extent, applicability and strength of normative circles in which they were embedded and to which they were exposed (Elder-Vass, 2010a). Both norm circles *and* conscious reflexivity were therefore important (among other entities) in causally influencing the actions of athletes to avoid negative sanctions associated with acting in these ways (Elder-Vass, 2012a).

In sum, responding to the research questions set out at the beginning of this thesis (see section 1.3), I propose that the mechanism of *how* coaches influence (or not) others can be explained well by the theories of orchestration (Jones & Wallace, 2005), emergentism and norm circles (Elder-Vass, 2010a). Rather than coach behaviour controlling or determining the actions of others (i.e., athletes or fellow coaches) in a homogeneous manner, coaches often orchestrate pathos by acting on behalf of the norm circle (or organisation) to endorse or enforce specific norms. These norms are then (through interaction or through reflection on decisions made) stored (or strengthened/weakened) in the habitus of others as dispositions, which play a role in influencing subsequent action (unconsciously). Importantly, action itself is multiply determined; it is also influenced by the conscious agency of the individual (i.e., athlete or coach) as well a range of other entities (e.g., the performance of opposition players). Indeed, *when*, *why*, and *under which circumstances* coaches influence (or not) others is highly dependent upon in-situ contextual contingencies. Here, of importance is that athletes (or others – e.g., assistant coaches) notice the (inter)action of the coach for the individual to be able to store the experience as a disposition. Further, the levels of power afforded to the coach (or other stakeholders) in the eyes of the agent is important in determining the strength of the normative influence. The examples presented in sections 6.2 – 6.7 provide important specific insights into *when*, *why* and *under which circumstances* the actions of cricket coaches were successful or unsuccessful in influencing the actions of others (e.g., athletes, assistant coaches), and how this is often a subtle or heterogeneous process. Overall, I contend that the coach's role in influencing is much more subtle than has been

portrayed in previous literature. The emergent property of the organisation as a whole (e.g., to perform well) is dependent upon both normative and non-normative mechanisms. The coach can act on behalf of norm circles/the organisation to partially influence action (normative mechanisms) and attempt to coordinate the actions of those within specific roles (non-normative mechanisms), but, ultimately, the (coordinated) actions of those in these roles are multiply determined by a complex range of entities. This means that the nature of coach (non)influence remains inevitably partial; coaching practice is a *part*, an orchestration, which interacts with a multitude of other entities to give the organisation its emergent properties.

7.3 General implications

This thesis has positioned the influence of sport coaches on others (e.g., athletes) less romantically than much of the extant literature (Meindl et al., 1985). Instead, influence (or indeed non-influence) has been presented as a humble, subtle, and often unobtrusive act (Jones & Wallace, 2005), whereby the athlete retains sufficient agency and the coach is themselves part of the complexity process that they (attempt to) manage (Tourish, 2019). Both the methodology, theorisation and associated findings provide important implications and considerations for stakeholders of coaching. Here, it is hoped that coaches and those within their relational networks (e.g., athletes, coach developers, and researchers) will be able to reflect upon the content to consider *how*, *when*, *why*, and *under which circumstances* coaching practice plays a role in shaping (or not) the future (inter)actions of others (e.g., athletes, assistant coaches). Understanding the influence of coaches in this way – accounting for complexity, uncertainty, indeterminacy and unpredictability – presents a powerful opportunity for coaches to better consider the potential heterogeneous (often unintended) consequences of their (inter)actions, grounded in the messy realities of practice (Cassidy et al., 2004). Indeed, in light of the empirical evidence presented and its related theorisation, it is hoped that coaches, coach developers and others (e.g., athletes) will be afforded an opportunity to reflect on implications for their own practices. For example, it is anticipated that stakeholders may:

- Be able to more closely understand how (inter)actions are both shaped by and shape the (inter)actions of others. Through the theorising employed in the present work, I have suggested that the way in which coaches and athletes interact can influence social structure (Elder-Vass, 2010a). For example, when athletes perform according to the norm and are praised by coaches in their orchestrated responses (e.g., when Michael hit the ball into a gap and was praised by Sam and Douglas), this can influence the strength of the norm (stored as a disposition) for those who notice the interaction. It is then the norm circle (through our experiences and reflection on these), storing a belief (disposition) in athletes which can causally influence the future (inter)actions of athletes, alongside the capacity for the athlete to make conscious decisions (Elder-Vass, 2012a). Importantly, then, athletes' actions are multiply determined and the coach *plays a role* in this process of determination; coaches do not dominate or fully control the actions of their athletes. Here, the emergentist perspective allows coaches and those within their relational networks (i.e., coach developers, coach managers, coach educators) to more realistically understand the influence that they have, instead of excessively crediting or punishing coaches for the actions of their players (Collinson et al., 2018). From these findings, coaches could therefore consider how their behaviours and interactions with athletes are likely to endorse or enforce particular norms to be more likely to influence athletes' according to their original intentions. Coaches can recognise that through endorsing normative standards (role norms), they may be able to orchestrate pathos and make organisational goals more likely to be achieved.
- Increase their awareness that not every (orchestrated) coaching interaction will indeed have an influence. Actions may be (intentionally or unintentionally) missed by athletes. For instance, when athletes are in immersive states after successful performance, coach behaviour may exist 'realised unperceived' (i.e., be delivered but go unnoticed). This was evident in the present thesis when Lawrence took a successful stumping and was praised by David, but had not noticed this interaction (please see section 6.4.2). Importantly, this finding suggests that coaches should look to constantly check and challenge their readings

of situations with others. Indeed, where David had assumed that his actions in praising Lawrence had positively influenced the athlete, in actual fact his behaviour had not been received by the athlete at all. Had David sought to clarify if and how Lawrence perceived this practice, this could have stimulated a learning opportunity. David might have been able to understand how he could more meaningfully engage with Lawrence under these specific circumstances to achieve his intentions. In some cases, praising athletes immediately after performance may not be the most opportune moment to influence.

- Appreciate that a wide range of behaviours can influence the strength, diversity and applicability of role norms, which play a role in shaping the actions of athletes (through norm circles storing dispositions or beliefs). For example, in section 6.6 where Norman had thrown the ball in a manner which did not conform to the norm of the fielding activity, David decided to use humour, which influenced the strength of the norm and how it was stored as a disposition within Norman's neural network. It is not just praise or criticism/punishment which can influence the strength, extent or applicability of norms. Instead, a range of behaviours can influence the norm depending upon how the behaviour is interpreted by the individual. Considering what works for whom and under which circumstances is thus important in positively influencing athletes. Had David used punishment with Norman in this instance this would have had the potential to rupture the social bond that they had. Here, coaches and coach developers can consider the subtle means through which pathos can be orchestrated by using a range of behaviours to endorse or enforce role norms.
- Understand that orchestrated behaviours do not always only influence the athlete whom the behaviour is directed towards. Indeed, when athletes are capable of noticing interactions between coaches and other athletes (e.g., when they are in earshot or the interaction is visible to them), this has the potential to also shape (through the norm circle) their belief about the norm. For example, in section 6.7.2 when John was punished by Sam for playing a reckless shot, this also served to endorse and enforce the norm to bat in a more conservative manner for Jamie and Roger (who at the time were sitting in the pavilion

waiting to bat, but nonetheless noticed the interaction between Sam and John). Importantly, here, coaches wishing to develop their sociological literacy could aim to understand and critically consider *when* their (inter)actions are likely to shape the beliefs (norms stored as dispositions) of other athletes than just those whom the behaviour was intended to influence.

- Accept that there may be good reasons why athletes are unable to produce behaviour which aligns to specific role norms on every occasion (Elder-Vass, 2010a). Indeed, even when athletes are committed to and attempt to enact the norm (are influenced unconsciously by dispositions and by conscious reflexivity), their ability to do so is influenced by a range of interacting entities (e.g., how the opposition perform) – it is multiply determined. This creates pathos for both coaches and athletes. Further, athletes have sufficient agency to *decide to* act with or against enforced or endorsed role norms. Indeed, acting against role norms may actually be conducive for innovative performance which brings success to the organisation. Equally, such acts may also be disadvantageous for the operational effectiveness of the squad or organisation. Good coaches will recognise when more room for agential creativity can be afforded to athletes and what the implications might be for individual and collective performance.
- Understand that athletes and indeed coaches are often required to negotiate and consciously decide between cross-cutting, overlapping, sometimes conflicting norms (they become 'sites of normative intersectionality'). Coaches (and athletes) play a role in shaping these norms (and their strength). The decision to enact one norm over another often depends on conscious reflexivity (e.g., how agents grant claims to leader agency, view power relations within the division of labour, and assess the relational consequences of acting with or against specific norms). For example, in section 6.7.1 where batters had been asked to play in a more attacking manner, and then not to worry about playing attackingly by Sam and David, respectively, Roger decided to ostentatiously enact the norm laid out by David as a result of his (afforded) role and power as the head coach of the squad (in comparison to Sam's role as assistant coach). In making this decision, Roger also assessed the relational

consequences of acting in a more attacking manner and getting out. Here, coaches can recognise that athletes may simultaneously conform with and resist their own and others' (i.e., assistant coaches') instructions.

- Appreciate the implications of findings in light of other prominent coaching theory. For example, many contemporary studies in sport coaching have advocated an 'autonomy-supportive' approach, whereby athletes are given more scope to make independent decisions and are often afforded opportunities to learn from mistakes without intervention (Denison et al., 2017). Indeed, theorising within this thesis provides coaching practitioners and pedagogists with an important perspective which can be used to critically consider when autonomy supportive approaches may (or may not) be effective. For instance, when an athlete makes a mistake within a session or match, this presents a problem to be resolved by the coach. Do they intervene (i.e., criticise, question, provide feedback), or do they say nothing in an attempt to allow the athlete to 'learn independently' from the mistake? In light of the theory of norm circles, this scenario presents a significant challenge to coaches, which requires a trade-off. If coaches ignore the mistake, the individual athlete might independently learn from this and be able to rectify the error themselves (or not and therefore make the same error again), however, other athletes may recognise that the coach chose not to intervene to endorse the role norm. Here, other athletes may come to understand that the norm is less important (the strength of the norm is reduced), or become unclear as to what the norm is/when it applies. Alternatively, if coaches intervene, this may help to endorse and enforce the (strength of the) norm for other athletes (storing the norm as a belief and disposition), however, the athlete who had made the error may be denied the opportunity to independently learn from the mistake. Resultantly, one way that coaches could approach this scenario would be to endorse or enforce the norm (through speaking to other athletes who had observed the performance) – for example, providing feedback or questioning other athletes – while affording the athlete who had made the mistake an opportunity to learn from it without intervention (i.e., not directly approaching the athlete). Here, both bases are potentially covered. Clearly, not

every mistake, example of deviance from, or conformity to the norm will need to be endorsed or enforced on every occasion. What is often important is that athletes are presented with an environment where they are able to 'share a similar understanding of the norms they are expected to observe and the array of likely responses to their observation or non-observation of them' (Elder-Vass, 2010a, p. 125). Arguably, athletes require a degree of familiarity with the norm (through their interactions with others) before they are sufficiently able to enact and understand the norm independently.

- Use the data presented to understand how it may be possible to achieve 'skilled social performance' (Elder-Vass, 2010a). Here, the data and associated theorising can be utilised to identify means through which athletes have negotiated between different (conflicting) norms to achieve successful performance (i.e., in the example with Roger and Jamie, who had taken conflicting approaches to batting, but had nonetheless both been successful). Coaches, athletes and coach developers can recognise that presenting athletes with ambiguous (contradictory) instruction is not inherently problematic (although it can be). Indeed, (unintentionally) creating ambiguity for players in section 6.7.3 afforded greater agential capacity to act in ways which were congruent with the organisation's overall objectives. Thus, the thesis can be utilised to enable coaches to critically consider when and why they might choose not to endorse or enforce a norm in the event that it is not enacted (i.e., because a wider norm has simultaneously been met) and what message this might send out to others. Athletes too, can consider and reflect upon the findings to develop 'practical consciousness of the diversity, applicability and extent of the normative circles in which they are embedded, and indeed of others to which they are exposed' (Elder-Vass, 2010, p. 133). In other words, they can recognise that through consciously reflecting on power relations and the relational consequences of acting (or not) in alignment with different norms, it may be possible to act in ways which avoid negative sanctions and achieve personal/organisational objectives.

It is hoped that the data presented and its related theorising provide an opportunity for coaches and athletes to reflect upon and develop their social competence (Lemert, 1997). Indeed, stakeholders of coaching can come to terms with one possible explanation of how the (inter)actions of coaches and athletes are both capable of shaping and being shaped by social structure (i.e., norm circles). As depicted earlier (in section 5.6), the intention is not for the data to directly map onto, predict, or generate definitive implications for how coaches should interact with athletes. Instead, the data are intended to probe, stimulate and provide a heuristic device which coaches can reflect upon to consider how their behaviour may be effective within their own specific idiosyncratic circumstances (Smith, 2018). Here, in keeping with emergentist and critical realist thought, we cannot assume that theorising of the mechanisms presented will nomothetically explain (or help to inform) the occurrence of events across a broad range of coaching contexts (Bhaskar, 1975). Instead, we must recognise that events are contingent and multiply determined; we must examine and consider which entities in that specific environment may be interacting to explain the event and the implications of this (Elder-Vass, 2005).

Reflecting upon his involvement within the research process, David referred to how his learning had allowed him to appreciate the importance of noticing and making his noticing observable to players in a way which was meaningful (i.e., able to positively endorse the norm):

> I think good coaching, or great coaching, is kind of about what you see, not off what you know or what you have known in the past. So the observation thing is just absolutely massive. As long as you've got the skills to get that across in the right way depending on who it is. The base of what you coach and how you coach is off what you see.
>
> *Semi-structured interview with David (20 April 2018)*

David also reinforced how the research process had helped him to understand why he acted in particular ways. Here, he mentioned how the questions asked in interviews stimulated him to bring his knowledge to a more conscious level. In particular, this supported David to be clearer in understanding how he influenced players:

> The questions that you have asked me have been interesting and it has been refreshing for me to know *why* I do stuff. And the reasoning behind it. So that gives me confidence, but that's sub-conscious confidence isn't it? It's not sub-conscious confidence, it's sub-conscious knowledge… especially the knowing. Stemmed by the

> questions you ask knowing that the knowledge is there… It has definitely helped because a lot of the stuff that we have talked about – obviously you say it is sub-conscious, so you're not really aware that it is there, but it is, so that does affect your behaviour… it's made me aware of it, and it has made me confident that I have got it, and now I know why I have got it and then now I'm beginning to know when I use it, and why I use it… it makes it easier for me… and the process is becoming clearer and clearer and clearer about how to get the best out of the people [players].
>
> *Semi-structured interview with David (20 April 2018)*

Toward the latter stages of the research programme, and reflecting on how his influence as a coach was not a dominating affair which controlled the actions of the athlete, David stated:

> Absolutely, I mean obviously they [the players] make the decision, but the more that you are able to deal with them [players], the more that you are able to work with them, that allows them to make that calculated decision based on the information that you have given them and what they have learned, and make sure that that decision ends up being the most successful one really.
>
> *Semi-structured interview with David (07 August 2018)*

Here, David referred to his understanding that the influence of the coach is often a subtle affair, whereby the player makes the decision (i.e., about how to perform), but that this can also be influenced by previous (orchestrated) interactions with coaches (i.e., relating to the endorsement and enforcement of specific norms).

7.4 Limitations and future directions

Although this thesis has explored how 'relational interactions are manifest in leader-follower dynamics, and how they combine to produce effects that are far more complex than current theorizing [sic] has acknowledged' (Tourish, 2019, p. 233), inevitably this complexity could always be investigated even further. Indeed, I acknowledge that it is highly unlikely that the present thesis has captured the full extent of working mechanisms underpinning coaching practice and its influence for the examples discussed. Regardless of how far we extend analysis, and how carefully we examine the motives, interests and (inter)actions of participants, we will inevitably miss something; good explanation, though, seeks to selectively identify the most pertinent causal factors (Elder-Vass, 2010a). What the present thesis does achieve, then, is a more sophisticated and detailed examination of the influence of coaching practice than has been completed previously.

One possible focus for future work would be to extend the chain of complex relational interaction and explanation even further. The present thesis has majorly focused on norms created (or endorsed/enforced) through orchestration and the influence of these norms on athletes' actions in the present. Future work could look to build on section 6.7.2 to examine the influence of such norms over time (e.g., what the implications of normative endorsement and subsequent role enactment in the present are for future role performance by coaches and athletes). Alternatively, research could consider how micro-social coaching events are shaped by an even broader range of normative and non-normative social structures. For instance, alongside consideration of how coaches and athletes interact and how such interaction both shapes and is shaped by norm circles (shaping dispositions/beliefs), work could also examine in greater depth, how athlete-athlete or athlete-(grand)parent interaction plays a role in shaping the norm circle and the ability of the norm circle to then causally influence action through dispositions. Investigation here could involve providing players (as well as the coach) with a wireless microphone to extend the analysis and explore how players make sense of coaching practice and set plans in independent conversations. The present research highlighted the significance of such work in the conversation which took place between Roger and Jamie when they were presented with conflicting role norms from the head and assistant coach (see section 6.7.1). Further, a more detailed understanding of how non-social entities (i.e., weather conditions, equipment) play a role alongside social entities in influencing action could be conducted. Here, deeper explanation of how the norm circles surrounding role performance *and* non-normative mechanisms interact (i.e., how athletes within a squad perform their individual roles and how these collectively contribute to the achievement of effective coordinated interaction) may provide organisations with a means to develop their operational efficiency.

Any account from a critical realist perspective must be recognised as fallible (Elder-Vass, 2010a). Indeed, I acknowledge that the data generated within the present thesis could have been interpreted through a number of different theoretical and epistemological lenses. However, the interpretations and sense making offered are coherent with the regional ontology and theory of

social structure and organisations put forward by Elder-Vass (2010a), to which I have subscribed, and which are consistent with my own ontological views of the world. Through exploring the utility of this theory to explain events within the actual world by means of testing it against empirical evidence, I believe that there is sufficient resonance to stake a claim for practical adequacy. It is anticipated that the philosophical, methodological and theoretical position outlined could be adopted, adapted and built upon by researchers in a range of fields, who are interested in the influence of practitioners. For example, the methodology and theoretical framework could be adopted to understand how coach educators orchestrate when attempting to influence specific normative standards with coaches. Given the remit of many sporting organisations, and, relatedly, coaching role specifications, is to foster positive development in athletes, the approach implemented in this thesis could also be utilised to extend beyond simplistic or anecdotal understandings of influence, moving toward examination of *how*, *when*, *why* and *under which circumstances* coaches foster (or do not foster) influence in particular settings. Demonstrating influence in these ways would help organisations to evidence impact (e.g., to potential funders). Further, research of this nature holds strong potential to develop the wider effectiveness of organisations, their employees, and their stakeholders through developing social literacy.

Alternatively, future work could seek to develop understandings of leader-follower relations in greater depth. Here, nuanced examinations of how leaders make claims for entitative status as leaders, and how followers dialectically grant, modify and/or resist these claims could be pursued to further our understanding of the emergent and temporal (non)influence of leadership practice. In a similar vein, research could aim to examine the (non)influence of specific behaviours (e.g., silence) delivered by leaders (coaches) based upon normative expectations and interpretations. For example, when coaches use silence in their practice, how is this perceived by athletes, and, specifically, how do normative influences (i.e., norm circles) play a role in shaping this understanding? How might intersectional norm circles (e.g., perceiving silence as a form of negative feedback, or perceiving the use of silence in a positive light) influence perceptions of followers, and, as such, the influence of coach behaviour? Here, continuing to pursue similarities or

differences between the *intended* influence of the leader and the *actual* influence had on the follower (i.e., how the follower perceives, interprets, and responds to the leader's practice) is important. Further development of the ontology of influence might be required in this sense. For example, it might be possible that the way a follower (athlete) *feels* is not necessarily influenced in a normative way, but how they *(inter)act*, potentially masking 'true' feelings, could be influenced normatively. Both dispositions (influenced through norm circles) and agential reflexivity (Elder-Vass, 2007b) could again be incorporated to develop insights into this topic.

Clearly, the examples presented within this thesis examine a relatively small number of social coaching events, in depth. Building upon the examples provided, there is still much to be investigated and understood in relation to *how*, *when*, *why*, and *under which circumstances* coaching practice influences (or does not influence) others. Here, paying sufficient attention to the temporal and emergent nature of coaching influence is essential. For instance, future work could focus on coaching moments in a variety of contexts and circumstances whereby: (a) coaching practice achieves an intended influence (on one/multiple athletes); or (b) coaching practice has an unintended influence (on one/multiple athletes). Building a 'bank' of these incidents, which include specific explanation of *how*, *when*, *why*, and *under which circumstances* the practice was (or was not) influential would provide an important heuristic device which could be reflected upon by a range of practitioners to understand how events may resonate with, or be applied to their own practices. Indeed, it is hoped that the philosophical, methodological, empirical and theoretical contributions made in this thesis provide an important (small) advancement to knowledge, which can be reflected upon and used as a base to further study the (non)influence of practitioners in a way which is both meaningful and representative of the messy realities of practice.

7.5 Summary

This chapter has discussed the principal empirical, theoretical and methodological contributions of this thesis to our understanding of *how*, *when*, *why,* and *under which circumstances* coaches influence (or do not influence) others. Indeed, I have demonstrated how this study has made an original contribution to knowledge by illustrating the mechanisms through which such influence

might be manifest, and also by explaining specific social events whereby *in-situ* coaching practice was either influential or not. Investigating (non)influence in this way has addressed an important void in the literature base: to focus more closely on the temporal, relational and emergent interactions between coaches and other stakeholders, and to consider the role played by both dispositions and conscious reflexivity in shaping action – in other words, to ask 'what happened next, and how'? It is hoped that this provides researchers and practitioners alike with a more sophisticated and humble, connected understanding of coach influence which better represents the complex realities of practice. Finally, in view of developing further nuanced understanding in this area, I have proposed that scholars could continue to examine the means through which leaders enact claims to leader agency and *how*, *when*, *why*, and *under which circumstances* followers enact, accept or modify these claims in a variety of contexts. For example, the methodological and theoretical approach could be used to more closely understand the orchestrated actions of coach educators and their influence on coaches. Specifically, this could examine how agents *think* and *feel* when interacting with others, and how or why this might contrast with their (normatively influenced) 'displays' of behaviour. Also of vital importance here is the exploration of similarities and differences between the *intended* influence of practice (e.g., from the leader and follower's point of view) and the *actual* influence of practice (i.e., from perceptions of leaders and followers alongside observations of behaviour/action). In doing so, it is hoped that such research would be well positioned to further support the sociological literacy of coaches and those within their relational networks.

8.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Letter of informed consent from institution

[redacted]

Adam Nichol
Office NB431, Northumberland Building
Northumbria University
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 8ST

'Examining the Relationships Between Coaching Practice and Athlete Outcomes (Phase 2 and 3 of Research)'.

Dear Adam

As Director of Cricket for [redacted] I am happy to provide approval for your research project, including interviews, video/audio recording, observations and other research methods (e.g., field notes) associated with being present at training and matches of squads, in line with the aims of the research.

We are happy for research to be conducted with players/coaches within the [redacted] pathway and to assist with recruitment.

If you require anything in addition please let me know, we look forward to hearing your results.

Best Wishes

[redacted]
Director of Cricket

[redacted]

Appendix 2 – Nettleton CC coaches code of conduct

[redacted]

18. CODE OF CONDUCT

The Code of Conduct defines the Company's expectations of all personnel – both employed staff and Managers with regards to their behaviour and personal conduct.

The Code of Conduct also establishes that all personnel have a duty and responsibility to be aware of their own professional practice. In order for the Code of Conduct to be fully understood it should be read in conjunction with the Company's disciplinary policy.

18.1 General

18.1.1 Employees are required at all time to abide at all times by the rules and their spirit. Both the rules detailed and the examples of misconduct/gross misconduct are not exhaustive. The highest standards of behaviour and performance are expected of Employee's at all times.

18.1.2 Employees must perform their duties with honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity.

18.1.3 Employees must be accountable to the Company for their actions.

18.1.4 Employees must treat others with respect and not discriminate unlawfully against any person.

18.1.5 The Code of Conduct includes:

- Company rules with which Employees are required to comply;
- examples of misconduct falling short of gross misconduct; and
- examples of misconduct which the Company normally regards as gross misconduct.

18.1.6 A breach of the Company code will render an Employee liable to disciplinary action in accordance with the Disciplinary procedure. An instance of gross misconduct will normally render an Employee liable to dismissal without notice.

18.2 Company Rules

18.2.1 The Company Rules include but are not limited to the following: Employees are expected to:

Attendance

- arrive at work promptly, ready to start work at their contracted starting time, and are required to remain at work until their contracted finishing times (persistent poor time keeping will be dealt with under the formal disciplinary solutions);
- obtain management authorisation if for any reason they wish to arrive later or leave earlier than their normal start and finish times;
- be familiar with the rules concerning the granting of leave and the notification of sickness absence, and follow these at all times;
- to work additional hours at short notice, as the needs of the business require;

56

[redacted]

Relationships with others

- maintain a professional relationship between clients, candidates, staff and representatives from other organisations with whom the Company works;
- demonstrate respect for all Company Employees and work and relate with each other in a professional manner on the basis of mutual trust, respect, cooperation and individual dignity;
- avoid actions and words that could be considered discriminatory, hostile, improper or offensive in any situation;

Work Performance

- to maintain satisfactory standards of performance at work, a high level of quality, accuracy and diligence;
- work flexibly and upon request carry out duties that may be outside their normal job remit;
- comply with any and all reasonable instructions given by the Company;
- dress in a manner appropriate to the function in which they are engaged and to ensure that their personal hygiene and grooming are properly attended to prior to presenting themselves at work;
- undertake their work with due regard for the health and safety, well-being and property of other workers, business contacts and members of the public;
- not report for duty under the influence of alcohol, drugs or other substances;

Company Protection

- act at all times (whether inside or outside of work) in the best interest of the Company;
- not to engage in any activity outside of their employment with the Company which could reasonably be interpreted as competing with the Company;
- not use the Company property, or any other property on the Company's premises, for any purpose other than that for which it was intended and for which they have authorisation;
- not to take Company property and equipment from the Company's premises other than for use on authorised Company business;
- to pay fully or in part for any loss or damage caused to Company property which is found to be attributable to an Employee's negligence or an act of deliberate vandalism;
- treat any information gained in the course of their employment about the business of the Company, and that of the Company's customers, suppliers and business partners, as confidential both during their employment and at all times after its termination;

- gain an understanding of the Company's health and safety procedures, observe them and ensure that safety equipment and clothing is always used;
- Gain an understanding of the Company's Anti Bribery and corruption rules, observe them and report and instances of concern to their manager.

18.2.2 If any Employee has concerns that any other member of staff is acting in a manner which appears to be in breach of the code or to involve any other form of:

- Fraud/Corruption
- Serious Conflict
- Bribery
- Bullying/victimisation
- Illegality
- Discrimination

the expectation will be that the concern will be immediately raised with their Manager.

18.3 **Misconduct And Gross Misconduct**

18.3.1 The examples of misconduct and gross misconduct given below are neither exclusive nor exhaustive they are meant purely as a guidance to Employees to help explain the standard of conduct that is expected by the Company.

18.4 **Misconduct**

18.4.1 These are offences in breach of policy/procedure or accepted standards of conduct which may lead to informal or formal disciplinary the likely result of which could be any sanction short of instant dismissal. This could include dismissal on notice where there are incidents of repeated misconduct. Employee's should be aware that this list is not exhaustive:

- offensive language,
- bad time keeping or persistent or occasional lateness,
- some failures to follow reasonable instructions or minor insubordination,
- lack of diligence,
- minor work errors,
- unprofessional behaviour,
- failure to comply with Absence Notification and Certification Procedure,
- ignoring minor safety or security rules,
- unreasonable standards of dress or personal hygiene,
- taking minor extended tea and meal breaks,
- unexplained time away from the job,
- any other conduct that from time to time is defined by the Company as amounting to misconduct.

[redacted]

18.5 **Gross Misconduct**

18.5.1 This is conduct so serious that it destroys the mutual trust and confidence between Company and Employee and merits dismissal without notice or pay. Employee's should be aware that this list is not exhaustive:

- deliberate falsification of records, deceit or other dishonesty;
- theft, unauthorised use or possession of the Company's property or theft of the property of a fellow Employee;
- any act or omission with intent to deprive the Company of monies due to it,
- knowingly claiming bonus or other payment to which the Employee is not entitled,
- borrowing the Company's money without written appropriate authority,
- committing any criminal act other than a motoring offence whether in the course of employment or otherwise;
- deliberate and/or persistent failure to obey the usual practice of the Company, or persistent disregard for the instructions of senior Employees of the Company,
- gross negligence in carrying out relevant duties,
- any serious neglect of normal precautions for the security or safety of the Company or its Employees,
- incapacity through alcohol or drugs;
- being in possession of, or dealing with drugs on the Company's premises or at a Company event;
- use of verbal or physical violence towards persons or property, or use or obscene language, or threatening or insulting behaviour,
- knowingly providing false information on a Company absence certificate or otherwise giving a false account of their whereabouts;
- unauthorised absence or leaving the place of work without permission during working hours,
- inappropriate sexual conduct on Company premises or at a Company event;
- serious acts of bullying, harassment or victimisation or any discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, race, religious or other belief, sex, gender or sexual orientation, or other offensive behaviour;
- accessing internet sites containing pornographic, offensive or obscene material or transmitting via email or otherwise material of that nature,
- unauthorised access to or use of computer data or computer hardware,
- serious unauthorised disclosure of confidential information (whether or not such information has been expressly designated as confidential),

[redacted]

- sleeping at work,
- accepting or offering bribes,
- Ticket Touting
- Betting or Match Fixing
- bringing the Company into disrepute;
- serious breach of the health and safety policies and procedures, or endangering the health and safety of a fellow Employee, client or third party, and
- any other conduct that from time to time is defined by the Company as amounting to gross misconduct.

Policy Status: Non Contractual
Application: All Employees and Workers

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